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NEGOTIATING THEORY AND PRACTICE WITH PRESERVICE ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS: AN EXAMINATION OF BURGEONING UNDERSTANDINGS AND PRACTICES OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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NEGOTIATING THEORY AND PRACTICE WITH PRESERVICE ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS: AN EXAMINATION OF BURGEONING UNDERSTANDINGS AND PRACTICES OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

by

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May, 2008

Dedication

To My Very Best Teachers and Fellow Musketeers

Reta Fern Saunders and Judy Ann McClain

Acknowledgements

In honoring those who have supported my work, I must first thank my parents, Tom and Reta, and grandparents, Chester and Marie Story, who labored tirelessly to instill the values of hard work, passion, creativity, and compassion in an unwieldy – and at times, stubborn and insubordinate – child. From my grandmother's reminder to find something good in everyone I meet, to my grandfather's gentle reprimands (that included Slo-Pokes and words of encouragement), to my father's insistence I complete what I start, to my mother's coaxing words, "You can do this" and "Your day will come" I have indeed been blessed. For their willingness to buy printer cartridges, paper, groceries (yes Dad, Mom splurged occasionally) and a new air conditioning system for my house during the lean graduate school years, I am particularly grateful.

I find it difficult to properly thank my sister Judy for a lifetime of lessons. From the early "vocabulary" assignments at the ripe old age of seven – where I was required not only to look up a set of increasingly difficult words, but also to use them appropriately in short stories of my own creation – to the encouragement to join her in the field of education, Judy almost single-handedly prepared me to tackle this work and rooted me on, even when she worried that the work of researchers had no practical application for educators in the figured world of schools. Judy was also instrumental in nurturing my own burgeoning development as a teacher; through years of hanging out on

couches, at softball fields, in cars at Sonic, and a whole host of other places, we engaged in a running dialogue about teaching that affected (I hope) both of our praxis. Those conversations and the patient tutelage from Mom – about things as varied as sewing, geometry, putting in tile floors, and finding the one "prize" at the flea market – were my pedagogical models.

I was fortunate to discover my mentor, Cinthia, early in my doctoral studies. From her I learned the importance of good hair and shoes, and perhaps more importantly, the "rules" of the academy. For her example as both a teacher and a scholar, I am deeply indebted; I am also grateful for her frank advice and willingness to laugh at my foibles. Our continued conversation about matters of race, gender, class and inequality have irrevocably shaped my thinking; any success I have in the future as a scholar and teacher educator will be the direct result of the seeds she planted during my time at the University of Texas at Austin.

I would additionally like to thank the other scholars who have helped extend my thinking: Mary Lee, for reminding me that a scholar is additionally a public intellectual; Sherry, for her patience and faith in my efforts; Karen, for her willingness to groom a graduate student from the liberal arts for work in the natural sciences; Colleen, for her amazing example and the reminder that studies like this are necessary and intrinsically valuable; and Julie, for helping me connect the hero's journey with the scholarship on figured worlds, a central component of this work. Lisa Goldstein and Lisa Cary served as incredible models for how to blend engaging teaching and meaningful scholarship; Angela Valenzuela provided a template for navigating the complexities of conversations about race, ethnicity, and social justice. I hope to carry these examples into my own work with pre and in-service educators.

I am especially indebted to my dear friend, Caroline, who served as my personal guinea pig in this complicated doctoral process. A year ahead of me in the program, she left behind a bread crumb trail that no doubt eased my own journey. For her willingness to take phone calls at odd hours, her insistence on checking to see if I had bathed or eaten in the heat of dissertation, her cards, cookies, and encouragement I am so grateful. We moved from classmates to colleagues without losing our sense of humor, and came out the other side with a lifelong friendship.

To my friend Leslie, I say thanks for reminding me that it is never a mistake to go into debt in the pursuit of education. Our friendship began at an airport in Houston, Texas as we were beginning our experience with Teach for America and continues today, these six years later. Although we now both have alphabet soup behind our names, it is good to remember that nothing is more important than a good movie or a cold beer. Her continuous flow of music and visits to Austin over the past several years helped keep me sane *and* grounded. Without my dear friend Louisa – who is now experiencing life in schools for a second time – I could never have completed this program. His commitment to making me laugh kept me from devolving into self-pity during the more challenging moments of this program. He also serves as a constant reminder that we can reinvent ourselves throughout our lives – and retain our relics from the past (B-52's, funions and bunions, "chicken soup for the gay man's soul") without losing our dignity.

There are those who served as mentors during my doctoral journey, those who served as colleagues, those who served as friends, those who served as a glimmer of hope on a late night. One person was capable of encompassing all of these roles, and many more. Jodie – who allowed me to "buddy tape" myself to her so that I could continue to stand and carry on (both emotionally and intellectually) – has been my constant reminder that how you perceive the world shapes your work within it. I have never met a smarter

or more compassionate human, or one so quick to laughter. I am indebted to Jodie for her willingness to help me work through a whole host of difficult situations, her capacity to construct the perfect metaphor, and her continued patience in restaurants as I attempt to make the "perfect" dinner selection. Tu y tu y nadie mas que tu.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank Walt and Pearl for their constant companionship in many long days of writing. Dogs teach us a great deal about what is important in the world – a good walk, a dance in the moonlight in the backyard, the joy of riding around in the car. Circled beneath my feet, they waited patiently for the moment when I could turn my attention their way. Perhaps now, I can.

NEGOTIATING THEORY AND PRACTICE WITH PRESERVICE ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS: AN EXAMINATION OF BURGEONING UNDERSTANDINGS AND PRACTICES OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Publication No._____

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2008

Supervisor: Cynthia Salinas

The purpose of this dissertation was to gain greater understanding about how preservice secondary English/language arts teachers made use of multicultural theory and practice in the context of urban classrooms. This qualitative case study examined preservice teachers' employment of the multicultural knowledge and tools they gained in the university setting when placed in the far different reality of diverse, urban schools. Employing the frame of figured worlds, this research strove to tease out how preservice teachers negotiated the complex and varied worlds through which they traveled when learning to teach, and to document their movement from novices committed to equity to those capable of nurturing and enacting social justice. The resulting successes and struggles derived by data analysis yielded three themes. The first detailed the impact of figured worlds in positioning preservice teachers inside of the schools; the second explored the participants' notions of multiculturalism and their capacity for enacting

literacy events supportive of social justice; the third and final theme described the tentative successes of the preservice teachers as they relied on sociocultural tools inside the classroom, as well as their burgeoning advocacy stance regarding students. Findings focused on three areas of interest. First, that the fragmented understandings of multiculturalism inhibited the preservice teachers' capacity to enact culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy; second, that the participants struggled with how to merge their notions of effective pedagogical practice given the rigid district-adopted curriculum they were expected to teach; and finally, that as the preservice teachers learned to author their own experiences inside the figured world of schools and create a space for students to do the same, they grew into more efficacious practitioners. Implications indicate that first, preservice teacher education programs should offer practicing teachers greater opportunities to consider figured world theory and funds of knowledge approaches early in their fieldwork experiences so that they might better contextualize the experience and develop a mindset that deflects deficit thinking. The second implication directly impacts teacher educators, calling on them to make the abstract theories studied in the university classroom more concrete and connected to the realities existing in schools. The third and final implication calls on teacher education programs to work diligently to foster a dialogue with preservice teachers that centers on issues of social justice.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In her lecture and acceptance speech given to the Nobel Prize committee in 1993, Toni Morrison (1994) told the story of a blind woman, exalted by her community as very wise, who was queried by young people to test her capabilities. They attempted to trick the woman by asking her a question that required physical vision but because of her inability to see, the sage could not answer directly. The philosophical vision that the wise woman carried held little meaning for the youths, who finally gave voice to a deeper (and likely, more meaningful) question: "Is there no context for our lives?" (p. 26). The archetype employed by Morrison—that of sage with an intangible mental vision that is either unrecognized or disregarded—appears with frequency in media and literature, and in some respects mirrors the focus of the study that follows.

This study sought greater understanding about how preservice teachers process concepts and theory—in particular, theory that centered on how to address appropriately the nature and needs of diverse students—once they entered into their practicum (apprentice teaching) semester. [For the purposes of this study, the use of the word "theory" served as a catchall for both theories and concepts, as often times preservice teachers do not see the distinction between the two and use them interchangeably.] Like the youths in Morrison's story, preservice teachers often question the authority and relevance of the sage's—in this case, the professors who taught them and the scholarship they studied—words. A desire for context served to undergird the entire transaction and made problematic the preservice teachers' journey. While theory might appear disconnected from practice to those sitting in classes at the university, once preservice

teachers engaged in fieldwork and began to interact with others inside of the school culture, a context that provided a space to connect theory emerged.

The existing scholarship (Hodgkinson, 2002) has suggested that while preservice teachers entering the field of education today are increasingly White, middle-class women (with a corresponding decrease in minority students entering the profession), the public school students with whom they will work—particularly in large urban centers—are expanding in terms of diversity. This cultural and/or economic incongruence can inhibit the teaching and learning process in a variety of ways. Because preservice teachers often carry different cultural frames of reference and viewpoints than their students (Cochran-Smith, 2003), they struggle with ways to employ pedagogical practices consistent with students' interactional patterns (Gay, 2000; Lee, 1990, 1995) or that draw on home and community knowledge (Buck & Sylvester, 2005; Moll & Arnot-Hopffer, 2005; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004). This inability to connect to and make learning relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995b) for urban students can have devastating effects in terms of the future, both for the students and our larger society. However, this also offers researchers extensive opportunities to examine the "chasm between the school and life experiences of those with and without social, cultural, racial, and economic advantages" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 5) and the educators with whom they work in schools.

Thanks to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) in 1972, and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), colleges and universities across the United States have incorporated (in varying degrees of success) multicultural content and perspectives into their teacher preparation programs (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 3). However, despite the large body of research that is supportive of multicultural education as an integral part of the teacher preparation process (Banks, 1993, 1995, 2003, 2004b; Cochran-Smith, 2001a; Cochran-Smith & Davis, 2004;

Gay, 1975; Geertz, 2000; Sleeter, 1996a, 1996b; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004; Sleeter & Grant, 1988), there is still the need for empirical studies like the one that follows to further fortify the existing scholarship.

Preservice teachers entering the field of education often resist conversations about difference and inequity (Cochran-Smith, 2001b, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2001). Yet, it is likely that without these conversations about difference—and the "opportunities for educators to reflect on their own identities and raise questions within the context of larger communities of learners" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 9)—there will be little growth for practicing and preservice educators. Engaging in conversations that address issues of diversity and how to embrace the spaces where different perspectives and worldviews interact are of great importance; this study sought to document such moments.

Teacher educators and scholars have written convincingly of the need to cultivate multicultural approaches and culturally relevant/responsive practices to increase public school students' opportunities for learning. Ladson-Billings (1995) has noted, "culturally relevant teaching must meet three criteria: an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support the construction of cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness" (p. 483). Rather than including a prescriptive list of strategies preservice teachers should employ in the classroom, most who have written about culturally relevant/responsive practices speak of teaching in more holistic terms. Teaching the whole child and a willingness to tap into "a wide range of cultural knowledge, experiences, contributions, and perspectives" (Gay, 2000, p. 31) of students can allow educators to further their intellectual development.

One way for preservice teachers to learn to build upon the existing knowledge of students without adopting a formulaic or rigidly structured set of strategies is to adopt a funds of knowledge approach (González et al., 1995; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez,

1992; Moll & Arnot-Hopffer, 2005; Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). Moll and Diaz (Moll, 1987) discovered that one of the primary problems with schools serving diverse students was that the school systems themselves "constrain children and teachers by not capitalizing fully on their talents, resources, and skills" (p. 302). When teachers (and preservice teachers) learned to view students' home knowledge and culture as a repository of viable funds from which to draw and then collaboratively consider ways to improve their curricular decisions, the teaching and learning processes became more transformative. Perhaps the greatest strength of this approach was that when educators made collaborative connections with parents, they were honoring the home culture. This bridge between home and school has shown great promise in building communities of teachers and learners that included not just those who spent their days in schools, but also parents and community members. When students' home culture extended to the school, relevance occurred as a natural result.

Just as students in public schools flourish in situations where learning is contextualized and connected to prior knowledge, preservice teachers can benefit as well. Finding ways to provide context for preservice teachers is problematic, however, even when they are participating in fieldwork experiences. The scholarship on figured worlds (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) has suggested that we enter and indeed co-exist in several worlds simultaneously, as do our students. By understanding how these figured worlds position us – as teachers, learners, empowered, or less empowered – and by adopting the tools employed within these worlds, we can grow in agency. Figured worlds also help explicate the context in which teaching occurs. By integrating the work of multiculturalists, culturally relevant/responsive researchers and funds of knowledge scholars within the realm of figured worlds, we can better understand how to build on the strengths of students to effect change within the classroom.

Ultimately, what this study sought to uncover was how preservice teachers internalized what they learned in the teacher preparation program and then, how this manifested in their classroom practice during the apprentice teaching semester. The theories and concepts addressed in this dissertation reflected a portion of those that preservice teachers were exposed to during the credentialing process. Given that many preservice teachers have come from schools far different from those that they will encounter during their final practicum, opportunities for growth are abundant. Regarding whether the preservice teachers in this study could find meaning, and as Morrison has said, discover a context for their lives during the apprentice teaching experience was in many ways tied to their willingness to take risks in applying theory to their daily practice. Like the youths in Morrison's story, the preservice teachers studied encountered sages along their journey in becoming teachers. Their ability to attend to the philosophical vision of these wise women and men in order to grow as educators and humans was additionally enhanced or limited by the figured worlds in which they worked.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions for this dissertation center on the degree to which preservice teachers are able to adopt and employ culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy, funds of knowledge theory, and multicultural practices within the figured world of schools during their apprentice teaching semester. More specifically:

1. How are understandings about multicultural education evidenced in preservice teachers' practice?
2. In what manner are preservice teachers employing culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy or funds of knowledge approaches during their apprentice teaching semester?

1.2 DESIGN AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study used a qualitative case study approach to investigate and gain understanding about the research questions previously noted. Three preservice teachers engaged in their apprentice teaching semester participated in this study. Additionally, three professors acted as informants, providing context and information about the teacher preparation program and their own theoretical understandings and preferences. The data collected included interviews, observations, and artifacts relevant to the case. The data was analyzed and shaped into a narrative text describing the experiences of the preservice teachers as they negotiated understandings about multicultural education, culturally relevant/responsive practices, and funds of knowledge theories within the figured world of schools.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

In their examination of how women come to understand and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge, and authority, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) have contended that women negotiate different epistemological stages as they gain access to and understanding about the world around them. For women, these stages can range from listening to the voices of others, to positing their own voices, to connecting external knowledge to unique perspectives, to constructing new knowledge informed by others but integrated and maximized by the self. This latter epistemological stance, that of the constructivist, "passionate knower" places at its center "a way of weaving [their] passions and intellectual life into some recognizable whole," (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 141) capable of empowering and/or improving the quality of life for others.

While gender was not the centerpieces of this study, connectedness—a governing feature in feminist thinking – was. Whether that connectedness existed by means of external human relationships created between researcher and informant, teacher and student, preservice teacher and the larger educational community, or by internal human interactions with thoughts and practices, the act of connecting guided my thinking. Given that the study was written by a woman and centered on the negotiations that three female preservice teachers made as they journeyed from their lives as students (and recipients of the "voices of others") to their work as teachers (who can maximize connections between external knowledge while constructing new knowledge), it was valuable to recognize that how women made meaning could enhance—or at the least, impact—the study's later findings.

In conceiving of a conceptual framework for this study, I was forced to confront my own way of meaning-making which diverted somewhat from that of other scholarly writers, whose work I have used as models. Having spent the past fifteen years in varying roles in the field of education—preservice teacher, novice teacher, textbook consultant, cooperating teacher, mentor teacher, scholar, and preservice teacher educator—I felt conflicted about which tools to employ to appropriately tackle this particular task. In the end, it seemed most fitting to enlist a metaphor that could serve as a bridge between my former work as an English/language arts teacher and my new role as an educational scholar. The metaphor used here, that of the hero's journey, served both as a frame for the literature reviewed in the following sections as well as a larger frame for the experiences preservice teachers encountered on the road to becoming licensed educators, which will be addressed in the final analysis chapters.

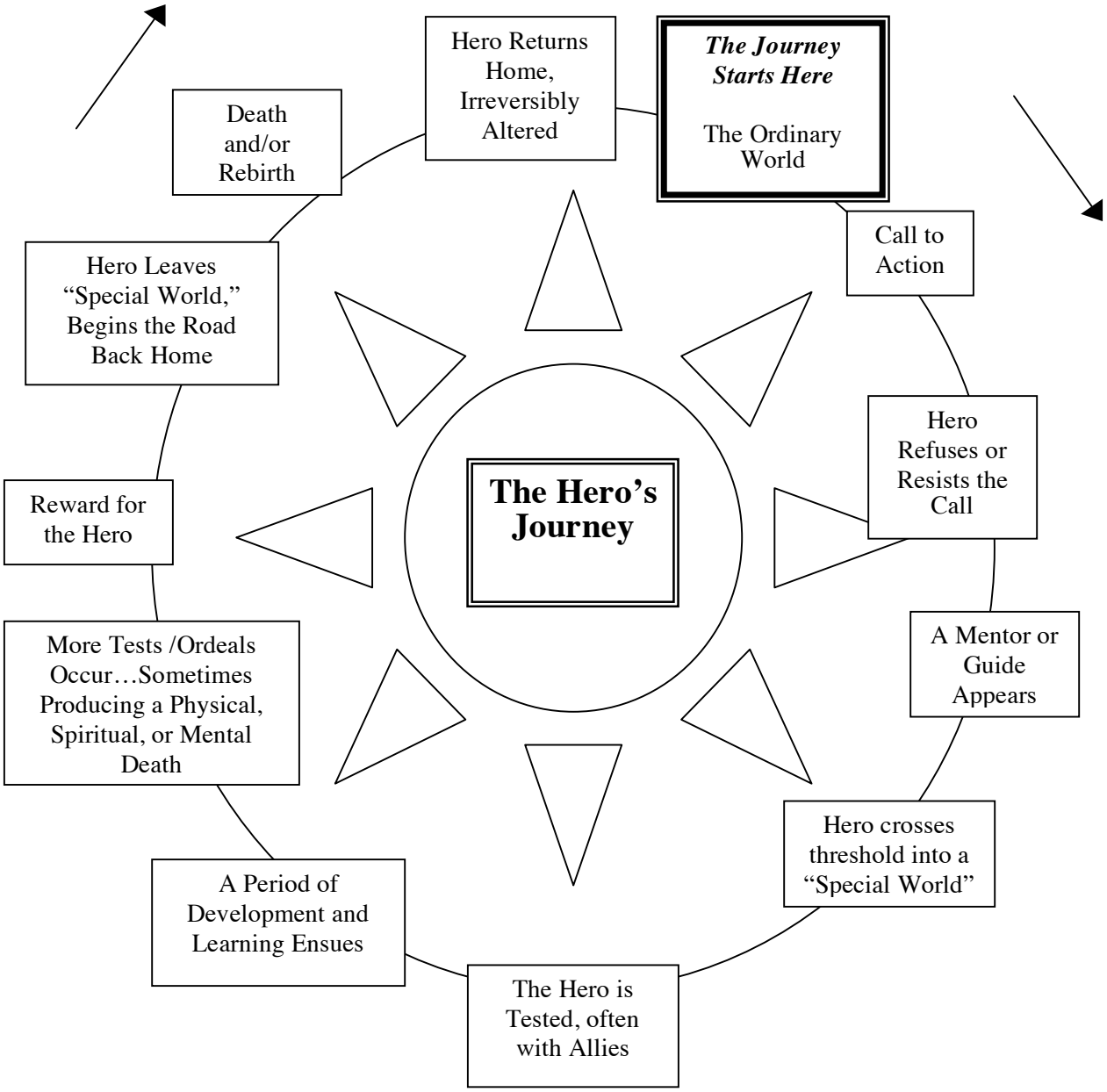
The use of Campbell's (1949) "hero's journey" is familiar to many secondary English/language arts teachers. When teaching archetype, novel development, and character analysis, the journey provides students with a clearly defined system on which to rely and offers a jumping off point for classroom discussions. The utility of the hero's journey in teacher education has been detailed in Goldstein's (2005) study of a course on classroom management where she made use of the metaphor as an analogue for preservice teachers' own journey. Her hope, to use the metaphor to "combat negativism, provide inspiration and support, and enable the students to see themselves as successful" (p. 9) was largely realized; despite the discomfort that some of her students felt in equating their work to that of a "hero," many expressed enthusiasm about the frame as a learning tool.

2.1 THE HERO'S JOURNEY, AN OVERVIEW

In choosing to use this frame to organize the review of the literature that follows, it is important to offer an overview of the steps of the hero's journey according to Campbell (1949) before connecting them to the existing research. In myth, the hero is often called to action because of some type of catalytic event. Often s/he initially refuses to pay attention, but after a guide or mentor appears, is willing to heed the call. They cross over a threshold into a "special world" where the hero is then tested. It becomes apparent that development and learning are necessary in order for the hero to make use of her/his skills in confronting obstacles. Once the development and learning period is complete, more tests and ordeals arise to challenge the hero. During this period, the hero may suffer a loss of some kind; this can manifest in the death of a loved one or the death of an idea or belief that was formerly central to the hero's psyche. After this second set of tests is completed successfully, the hero is offered a reward. S/he begins the journey out of the "special world" and back to the ordinary world. This part of the journey might also include a death or rebirth, ending in the hero's return home, irreversibly changed (see illustration 1 for a visual rendering of this journey).

In order to employ the hero's journey as a metaphor for the passage preservice teachers make from student to educator, the following section organized the review of the literature with the same basic steps delineated thus far.

Illustration 1: The Hero's Journey



REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.2 The Call

Because the focus of this study was not why people chose to enter teacher preparation programs but rather how they negotiated the transition from student to educator, the call has been noted only briefly in this section. In her study of the development of identity in preservice teachers, Danielewicz (2001) has detailed several factors in students' decision to become educators. Many of her students had great teachers as role models; others viewed teaching as a service project or as a mission; others had a love of subject that compelled them to become teachers; still others came to teaching hoping to enact larger goals like equity, social justice, and "literacy for democratic citizenship" (p. 43). While the urge to teach manifests for a variety of reasons, it is important to consider the demographics of those who heed the call, and who is not hearing the call at all.

Hodgkinson (2002) has noted that while student enrollment across the United States has become an increasingly diverse 40% (he included a range of diversity, from 7% to 68%, depending on the state in question), teacher education reports have reflected an increasingly White enrollment in their programs (p. 104). Using data culled from the National Center for Education Statistics, Cochran-Smith (2004) discovered that the vast majority of university students enrolled in teacher preparation programs (80-93%) were White. As of 1997, 86% of the national teaching force was White, with the remaining 14% represented by minority groups. Although the 14% (minority teacher representation) was up from that national low of 7% in 1986, the low numbers have suggested that a large proportion of minority students are currently taught by teachers different from themselves (p. 5). While these statistics might represent burgeoning

opportunities for minorities in other occupations (Hodgkinson (2002) has correlated the decreasing numbers of minority students in teacher preparation programs to a rising number of minority students in business administration programs, for example) they do little to explain why there are fewer and fewer minority students aspiring to teach.

Regardless of where the call to teach originated, many (predominantly White students) enrolling in teacher preparation programs carry assumptions about teaching and learning with them into the field. These assumptions do not necessarily reflect the actual reality of life in schools, but rather the reality of their own experiences as students in public schools (Britzman, 2003). While the call is valuable in propelling university students onto the path to becoming teachers, it is less salient to the project discussed in this work. So let us leave this arena now, and consider what happens to preservice teachers once they have heard the initial call to study to become teachers.

2.3 Refusing (or Resisting) the Call

Preservice teachers can refuse (or resist) the call in many ways, even after deciding to enter a teacher certification program. One way this might manifest is in a resistance to the educational theory that is a regular part of university education programs. Preservice teachers sometimes resist acknowledging that they carry assumptions about teaching and learning with them into education programs and that these assumptions might impede their success as educators. This has been well documented in the existing research, and scholars (Buck & Sylvester, 2005; Cochran-Smith, 1995, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Howard, 1999; Lee, 2002; Meier, 2002; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004) have elaborated on the cognitive dissonance that preservice teachers faced when attempting to match their intuitive understandings about teaching and learning to the educational theory discovered in the university classroom. Preservice teachers at the beginning stages of their training period can confront “culture shock” and

a requisite frustration with the "overwhelming complexity of teacher's work and the myriad ways this complexity is masked and misunderstood" (Britzman, 2003, p. 27). Thus, while preservice teachers are not necessarily refusing the call to teach, they often resist particular theories about multicultural education, pedagogy, and learning that are presented in college classes.

This is particularly true of university students who might see theory as separate from practice and demonstrate a technician's approach (Zeichner & Liston, 1996) to their role as teacher. There is a growing concern that while the number of students of color, students with limited English language proficiency, and students from economically disadvantaged homes appearing in schools is increasing, the teaching force is still populated largely by White females, many of whom were reared in middle class homes (Sleeter, 1996a). Using data derived from a two-year ethnographic study of thirty practicing teachers participating in a comprehensive multicultural education staff development program, Sleeter (1996b) discovered that while teachers found value in the professional development, their classroom practice was largely unchanged (p. 87). A majority of the teachers in her study viewed education as potentially emancipating for students but reified the values of individualism and hard work as a part of the process. Indeed, several of the teachers in her study (reared in working class homes) had propelled themselves into the middle class by means of education; they could not understand why the students with whom they worked did not evidence similar goals. Thus, while the largely White teachers in the study participated willingly with the goal of improving their work with minority students and students of poverty, their mindsets disallowed understandings about institutionalized racism (and the implications of this racism on student learning) to surface.

If practicing teachers who ostensibly seek multicultural education in order to improve their practice are resistant to these ideas, it seems to follow accordingly that preservice teachers – who have largely found success in the educational milieu and might carry similar worldviews to the teachers in Sleeter's study – might – reflect a similar resistance. In many colleges and universities that prepare classroom teachers, exposure to the tenets of multicultural education has become an accepted part of the foundational curriculum. The section that follows uncovers different approaches to multicultural education existing in the literature and the ensuing conflicts that have arisen as a result of these approaches.

2.4 Resistance to the Tenets of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education exists in the literature as far back as the 1970's and is in large part a response to the "cultural deprivation" theories posited by researchers in the 1950's and 1960's (Bloom, Davis, & Hess, 1965). According to Banks (1993), those who supported the notion of cultural deprivation laid blame for students' underachievement on the "socialization experiences in their homes and communities," that did not allow them "to attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that middle-class children acquire and that are essential for academic success" (p. 29). This model of deficit thinking persisted until the 1970's, when it was upended by new understandings of the utility of multicultural education. Multicultural education is used here as a broader context (and frame) for this review because it reflects a larger conversation about how preservice teachers might approach their work with diverse students. There are a variety of manners that this information is imparted to teachers (through professional development) and preservice teachers (in university classes).

In their review of the literature, Sleeter and Grant (1988) detailed five approaches to multicultural education that have gained recognition over time. The first, "teaching the

culturally different," centered on designing compatible education programs that could yield elevated achievement in students of color. The authors found that while this approach might have had meaningful goals, it did little to address the impact of economic barriers in the existing system of education. The second approach, which the authors labeled a "human relations" approach, was geared more toward sensitivity training for educators. The emphasis in this approach was on people getting along with one another, rather than enlarging educator understandings about issues like institutional racism that might inhibit student success. The third approach, "single group studies" derived from particular programs, like Black, Chicano, or women's studies. While the authors found utility in these programs, they worried that an emphasis on one area of discrimination might isolate it from other, related forms. The fourth approach to multicultural education – which – the authors found most commonly subscribed to in the literature – was – that of "redesigning schooling to make it model the ideal and pluralistic and equal society" (Sleeter, 1989, p. 55).

The authors acknowledged the usefulness of redesigning schools to cultivate greater equity, but they supported a more radical, social reconstructionist approach, that "teaches directly about political and economic oppression and discrimination, and prepares young people in social action skills" (p. 55). This fifth approach attempted to take the positive aspects of the four described earlier and couch that thinking in the sociocultural context of the larger hegemonic society.

While a reconstructionist approach is an admirable goal, there is much resistance to that precept in the realm of public schools. Scholars (Cochran-Smith, 2001b; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2004; hooks, 1994; Howard, 1999; Kozol, 1991; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995) have regularly critiqued the educational system as inherently supportive of White privilege and maintained that the institution itself seeks to perpetuate the behavior and

goals of the dominant culture. Nieto (1995) has written, "multicultural education has a long way to go in both theoretical and practical terms to become truly empowering" (p. 193). She contended that it is necessary to visit the critiques of multicultural education in order to reframe the scholarly discussion and push our collective thinking forward.

Voices from the political Right, often funded by private foundations that do not rely on the peer review process (Cochran-Smith, 2003) have criticized the more Left-leaning (and often, academic) research for focusing too much on groups rather than individuals, and as a result moving the conversation away from the mythic ideal of the value of individual accomplishment and meritocracy that is woven into the fiber of the United States. Among these, D'Souza (1991) has argued that highlighting cultural differences does little more than to drive wedges between separate groups, leading some (ostensibly, those with less power) to "self-pity and self-ghettoization" (Takaki, 1993, p. 115). Similarly, Ravitch (1990) has argued that multiculturalists from the Left emphasize the many (pluribus) to the exclusion of the individual (unum) and his/her personal accomplishments. Another critique of the Left is the danger of a simplistic reliance on a "multiplicity of perspectives" approach. On the surface level, this encouragement of multiple perspectives might sound reasonable; if used uncritically however, we could justify the teaching of the Holocaust from the Nazi point of view, perpetuating the idea that all perspectives (regardless of how repugnant) warrant equal attention and are equally valuable as positions of truth (Nieto, 1995, p. 197-8).

Organizing themselves around ideas like national unity, democracy, and pluralism, conservative writers are criticized by the Left for advocating for one large, blended (melting pot, if you will) culture. Giroux (1992) has suggested that this notion of a "common culture" does little to advance multiculturalism and more to foster the growth of the nativism and racism "that has been resurgent in the last decade in the media, mass

culture, and American schools" (p. 10). According to Takaki (1993), Ravitch is "driven by a desire for universalism: she wants to affirm our common humanity by discouraging our specific group identities, especially those based on racial experiences" (p. 114). The appearance of "single group" courses, like African American or women's studies, is particularly vexing to writers from the Right like D'Souza. In Illiberal Education (1991), he makes the case that single group courses have less value than the more "traditional" liberal arts curriculum historically offered, and serve a far different purpose: to falsely elevate the grades and graduation rates of students of color, women, and others who might not have been successful negotiating the traditional curriculum. Thus, rather than offering courses that allow a "specific minority to learn about their history and community" (Takaki, 1993, p. 113), these courses are perceived as safety nets to catch failing or less capable students.

Several scholars (Giroux, 1992; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995) have suggested that the Left and Right are equally culpable in glossing over issues of power that undergird inequity and perpetuate the marginalization of some groups of citizens while promoting others. In critiquing such additive multicultural activities as Black History Month, multicultural dinners, or events that celebrate the achievement of women, Giroux (1992) pondered why the dominant culture that "created and sustains the very problems that provided conditions for such heroic struggles" (p. 12) did not also include a space for a variety of "histories, cultures, and experiences" to come forward. Perhaps this contested space is due in part to the fact that "the two sides are talking past each other: the other side not only disagrees but cannot understand or even hear... [leaving both sides] beleaguered" where both "can legitimately claim the underdog role because neither can confidently assume control" (P. Erickson, 1992, p. 111).

This inability (or perhaps, unwillingness) to consider differing perspectives mirrors the polarization that is currently abundant in a variety of spaces in our national dialogue. Takaki (1993) has asked, "In the telling and retelling of our particular stories, will we create communities of separate memories, or will we be able to connect our diverse selves to a larger national narrative?" (p. 121). Given the contention in the scholarly (and even mainstream) realm about how best to employ multicultural education – and for what means – it follows that preservice teachers might resist and wrestle with these same issues.

Because preservice teachers often take multicultural classes as a course requirement for teacher certification and are a captive (and perhaps at times, resistant) audience, there is also the possibility that they do not fully accept arguments for multicultural education. This reluctance to embrace multiculturalism might also reflect the manner in which preservice teachers are exposed to such ideas. Research (Cochran-Smith, 2001a, 2001b, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Sleeter, 1995, 1996a) has suggested that preservice teacher programs that integrate ideas throughout course content have greater potential for creating a lasting imprint in the minds of university students. Thus, if multicultural education were woven into and across the content areas instead of being presented as just one course in a list of many, opportunities for contextualizing and internalizing might follow as a natural result.

Like many complex systems, the field of education is resistant to change. This resistance is then handed down to novices, and can contribute to the perpetuation of hegemonic norms—norms consistent with the environments from which many preservice teachers have sprung. Several approaches to curricular reform occur in the literature. The significance of these curricular models is that—if implemented well—they have the potential to alter school practices, thus producing students with broader cultural

understandings. When those same students move into teacher education programs, there is the possibility for less resistance in preservice teachers when encountering the tenets of multicultural educational practices.

In his discussion of curricular reform models employed by public schools over the past thirty years, Banks (2003, 2004a) has detailed four overarching approaches:

- the contributions approach—the curriculum is unaltered, but special events like holidays, cultural practices, or the celebration of a hero are evident in this approach;
- the additive approach—the curriculum remains the same, but new voices, content, and themes are added in to enrich the traditional curriculum;
- the transformative approach—the curriculum is actually altered. This allows for multiple perspectives, concepts, issues, events, and thinking to enter into the curriculum;
- the social action approach—this transcends curriculum altogether, and involves students working as change agents in their communities. Students take on social issues and work to find ways to solve problems.

While the contributions and additive approach have made their way into public school and college classrooms with greater regularity, the transformative and social action approaches lag behind. Preservice teachers who have recently enjoyed success or at least graduated from public schools that employed such (contributive or additive) models might have greater difficulty in understanding the value of the latter approaches. This could further perpetuate preservice teachers' resistance toward the more transformative models (Cochran-Smith, 2001b, 2004; Sleeter, 1995). Lacking any personal experiences with these types of models, preservice teachers might exhibit a reluctance to employ the latter models in their own classroom practice.

2.5 Appearance of Mentors and Entry into the "Special World" of Schools

A hallmark of many teacher preparation programs is the requirement that preservice teachers participate in fieldwork while completing coursework at the university. There appears to be relative agreement on the usefulness of this requirement in the existing literature, particularly when preservice teachers are placed in diverse settings (Howard, 1999; Irvine, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995b, 2001; Nieto, 1992, 1995; Schall, 2003/4; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995; Smagorinsky & Fly, 1993; Takacs, 2002). The preservice teachers participating in this study entered the "Special World" of schools early in their professional development sequence. They were paired with an assortment of potential mentors, including university professors who exposed preservice teachers to theory and teaching methods, cooperating teachers who supported them in school placements, and university facilitators who observed them practice teaching and supported the fieldwork experience.

Figured Worlds

Understanding the degree to which preservice teachers adopt and employ the notions, theories, and tools they have had access to during their teacher preparation program requires that we first acknowledge who they are as individuals. The unique lived experiences of this study's participants figure largely in their willingness and capacity to embrace the ideas explored in university classrooms and to transfer this learning to the schools in which their apprentice teaching occurred. Britzman (2003) acknowledges that moving from the position of "student" to that of "teacher" is a complex and dialogic process. That is, "teaching must be situated in relationship to one's biography, present circumstances, deep commitments, affective investments, social context, and conflicting discourses about what it means to learn to become a teacher" (p. 31). One way to address this tug and pull of the development of a preservice teacher's

voice amid the "cacophony of past and present voices" (Britzman, 2003, pg. 31) is to evoke the concept of figured worlds, discussed at great length by Holland and her colleagues (1998).

The concept of figured worlds merges the work of Vygotsky (1978), Bakhtin (1981), and Bourdieu (1977) and further suggests that identity and agency are formed and altered through "socially produced, culturally constructed activities" that develop as people move in and out of different "worlds" (Holland et al., 1998, pg. 41). Figured worlds have four characteristics:

- Figured worlds are by their very nature historical worlds in which people are recruited for participation or into which they willingly enter;
- Figured worlds are social realms in which the position of participants matters. Some of these worlds "we may never enter because of our social position or rank; some we may deny to others; some we may simply miss by contingency; some we may learn fully";
- Figured worlds are socially organized and reproduced; we recreate them by work with others;
- Figured worlds distribute people by "spreading our senses of self across many different fields of activity." They are peopled by familiar social types and developed "through continued participation in the positions defined by the social organization of those worlds' activity" (Holland et al., 1998, pg. 41).

That people are positioned is at the center of the figured world theory; people "look at the world from the positions into which they are persistently cast" and their perspective shapes and alters their thinking over time (Holland et al., 1998, pg. 44). The value of including this work as part of the conceptual framework for this study was that it corresponded well with the notion of "special worlds" that was a necessary component of

the hero's journey. Harkening back to the work of sociocultural theory, this body of research additionally enriched the data analysis process; by weaving the additional theoretical frames inside the figured worlds context, a greater understanding of the intersecting realities of the preservice teachers was achieved.

2.6 Tests, Development, and Learning

Entry into the field placement and, in particular, the figured world of apprentice teaching produces a series of tests for preservice teachers. Despite the fieldwork requirements from previous semesters, this is often the first real taste of life in schools for preservice teachers. This also at times offers preservice teachers their first opportunity to test their assumptions—about how students learn, the utility of their university coursework in providing practical solutions for the difficulties they face as teachers, and about their efficacy as teachers (Britzman, 2003). In following along with the hero's journey, this is the point where preservice teachers must engage in further development and learning and utilize tools they have gained through their interaction with mentors and theories of pedagogical practice. The following sections detail pertinent research that preservice teachers have had access to (in varying degrees, depending on courses and instructors) during their university coursework.

Development and Learning in Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theories have been presented to this study's participants in a variety of contexts. Some gained exposure to sociocultural theory as a part of a learning theory or child development course, and some engaged with this theory as it was contextualized within the frame of English/language arts coursework. Engagement with the literature on socioconstructivist pedagogy gives rise to the complexity of the theory, and our capacity for transferring "a theory of learning into a theory or practice of teaching" (Richardson,

2003, p. 1623). The legacy of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning is present throughout the educational literature (Applebee, 1991, 1996; González, 2001; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; González et al., 1995; Lee, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2003; Moll, 1997, 2001; Richardson, 2003; Smagorinsky & Fly, 1993) and widely recognized for its contribution to our collective thinking about how students learn. Moll (2001) has suggested that changes in school demographics and an increasing "ethnically and racially heterogeneous student population, [has produced] a crisis in educational practice that [has] created a receptive context for Vygotsky's cultural-historical perspective" (p. 113). Given that urban schools are experiencing increasing heterogeneity in their student populations while the faculty of these same schools remains largely White and female, the sociocultural frame that guided this study is of particular relevance.

Vygotsky's (1986) work centered on how language and the desire to make social contact propels students from internalized (egocentric) to externalized speech (p. 36). Language and its use then becomes a tool for students to use to gain access to learning, which is accessed and mediated through social encounters with adults and other peers. Scribner (1990) concurs. She has written,

> The world in which we live in is humanized, full of material and symbolic objects that are culturally constructed, historical in origin and social in content. Since all human actions, including acts of thought involve the mediation of such objects, they are, on this score alone, social in essence (p. 92).

In *Mind in Society*, Vygotsky (1978) explained how the "interpersonal process [of the student] is transformed into an intrapersonal one" (p. 57). This process happens on two levels—first the social level, and then the individual level. Thus, as learning occurs, a student situates his understanding in response to the behavior of those around him—perhaps with peers who are more and less competent than him—before situating that understanding within himself.

Sociocultural theory is of particular value to researchers who study language arts classrooms, where teachers are grappling with ways to introduce compelling, culturally rich literature and writing activities to foster critical thinking in addition to "respecting insights, experiences, ideas, and perspectives" (Carey-Webb, 2001, p. 9) of students. The utility of using sociocultural theory as a frame for a study of language arts preservice teachers is also efficacious because it provides

> a powerful framework for thinking about teaching and learning. Rather than focusing either on specific content to be learned or on the nature of the learner, they lead to a consideration of learning-in-context—to how knowledge develops within a particular environment for teaching and learning (Applebee, 1991, p. 551).

English/language arts teachers are particularly adept at constructing opportunities for learning-in-context to occur. Teachers regularly situate the study of a piece of literature in its historical context; another way teachers foster context is by helping students understand the connections between reading and writing. The use of thematic units that cross literary genres and a variety of media also contribute to relevance and contextualized learning for students in English/language arts classes. Transferring these precepts to the next generation of language arts teachers is gaining urgency as the field responds to the increasing pressures of the standards and accountability movements currently in play.

Given the pressing national concern to meet the requirements mandated by No Child Left Behind, English/language arts education scholars are attending not only to how to increase the technical knowledge of novice teachers, but also how to include sociocultural tools to increase student literacy. Langer (1997) has offered several underlying assumptions about literacy and literature education that occur in the research. Among these, a connection to the larger community is critical; second-language learners rely on their first language to gain access to English; students who are engaged in active

learning as opposed to exercises gain efficacy more quickly than those who are not; and integration and scaffolding are necessary for elevated literacy (p. 607). These assumptions are reflective of a larger conversation about the social nature of learning for language arts educators that exist in the research (Applebee, 1996; Freedman, Delp, & Crawford, 2005; González, 2001; González et al., 2005; Jaramillo, 1996; Langer, 1997, 2001; Lee, 1995, 2002; Quintara-Sarellana, 1997; Smagorinsky & Fly, 1993).

In their study of how a language arts teacher approached her work with students in an untracked classroom using Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, Newell, Gingrich, and Johnson (2001) found several principles existing that contributed to her success. Among these: a long-term curriculum existed that allowed for "ever-deepening levels of complexity" (p. 118) to arise; the creation of a learning community where students were in control and capable of "building structures that support[ed] them in challenging themselves" (p. 118); there were opportunities and supports in place for diverse ways of knowing and learning; and learners were actively engaged in the educative process (p. 119). This success appeared tied to the teacher's understanding and use of sociocultural precepts in the English/language arts classroom.

Other studies exist that indicate that there is not always a smooth transition between theory and practice. One factor is that while preservice teachers are exposed to theory in the university environment, the school culture they enter for fieldwork can sometimes support alternative understandings. In some cases these understandings are "geared toward content coverage and control" (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999, p. 3) thus displacing teachers' theoretical learning with the practical concerns that exist at the school site. This same study promoted the benefits of using theories that are compatible to both environments (in this case, activity theory) so that the transition from university to school site was less formidable.

In her investigation of how homes shape language processes, González (2001) has acknowledged "a sociohistorical perspective is essential to understanding any representation of knowledge transmission" (p. 62). While González's work focused on the impact of home literacy practices on student learning, her argument that knowledge transmission occurs in social contexts is equally relevant to a discussion about burgeoning English/language arts teachers. This is especially true of preservice teachers who are endeavoring to make meaning of the theoretical base they are exposed to in college courses while simultaneously gaining practical experience during their fieldwork placements. Newell and his colleagues (2001) have written, "We assume that social and cultural factors mediate teachers' development in particular contexts and that those settings are particularly powerful factors in shaping how beginning teachers learn to envision their own practices and beliefs" (p. 305). And so, it is important to help preservice teachers consider how to use the multiple (often, overlapping) contexts in which teaching and learning co-exist to strengthen their pedagogical practice, and to ensure that student learning is fortified. One way to fortify this practice is by mining practical theories that have shown potential for improving the quality of instruction and improved student learning; one such model is a funds of knowledge approach.

Development and Learning in Funds of Knowledge

Applied models of sociocultural principles appear with frequency in the literature. Those particularly salient to this study were found in the work of Moll (1997; Moll, 2001; Moll et al., 1992) and Lee (1995; Lee, 1998, 2002, 2003), who draw upon the cultural "funds of knowledge" that students bring to school from their home and community environments. Tapping into these funds provides teachers with a means to connect students' prior knowledge and home culture to their work in schools, thus creating a more relevant environment for learning in the classroom.

The term "funds of knowledge" made its appearance in the literature in the 1980's, when anthropologists Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg gained funding to study non-market systems of exchange in the Tucson, Arizona Mexican-origin community (González et al., 2005, p. 3). Drawing on Wolf's (1966) discussion of household economy, which "distinguishes several funds that households must juggle" in order to survive, Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg (1992, p. 314) concluded that kin and non-kin networks were not only valuable in instilling a sense of community among and between families, they were a necessity to flourish in the United States. González, then a graduate student in the study ("The Tucson Project"), recognized "the transformative effect of knowing the community in all of its breadth and depth" (2005, p. 3). When Moll took a faculty position in Tucson in 1986, he brought with him an interest in Vygotsky's theories, which emphasized "how cultural practices and resources mediate the development of thinking" (2005, p. 4). Working in tandem with the anthropologists and with graduate students and teachers, Moll and González developed a series of ethnographic studies that sought to tap into families' funds of knowledge as a tool to better engage Latino students in school.

Because of the large number of Latino students present in schools across our state, it is possible that a funds of knowledge approach could offer several tangible benefits for teachers, students, and schools. Among these:

- access to thick, multi-stranded networks;
- an understanding of how mediating structures can help teachers (experienced and preservice teachers) tie learning to home and home knowledge to school knowledge;
- a way to foster rich, connected relationships between schools, homes, and universities;

- the opportunity to empower students and teachers through the formation of culturally relevant curriculum;
- an elaborated view of culture that has the possibility of expanding teacher thinking about culture;
- a reinforced notion that teacher reflection (about practice as well as the larger context in which they teach) is a necessary part of the teaching/learning process.

Research has suggested that large networks have been a necessity for the survival of families living in border towns on each side of the line between Mexico and the United States since the 19th century (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 314). Prior to the 1930's, families between Mexico and the United States crossed borders with relative ease. With the "massive repatriation and deportation policies and practices of the 1930's" (p. 315), however, families were divided and the creation of "they-us differentiation … [interrupting] the easy flow of kin between extended cross-border familial networks" (p. 316). In order to flourish in unstable border-town labor markets, families lived in clusters along both sides of the border, and relied on extensive networks to manage households and garner resources. Among the resources historically available in these extensive networks were funds of knowledge about farming and ranching, the maintenance of equipment, home construction, repair, water management, and homeopathic medicine. The latter was particularly valuable given that there were historically few physicians in the border areas, and medical costs could be particularly prohibitive (p. 317). Over time and with the migration of workers to urban centers across the United States, these same networks still exist and serve as resources for a large number of students enrolled in public schools today.

Moll (et al, 1992) found that the communities he studied were "flexible, adaptive, and active, and may involve multiple persons from outside the homes" (p. 133). Thus,

the term "multi-stranded" serves as a marker for extensive and complex relationships among people. A child might learn a craft from the same person who goes fishing with his father at regular intervals. As a result, the relationships are intertwined and multi-dimensional. The extensive interactions also suggest "long-term relationships based on both reciprocity and confianza, a sense of trust and faith in the support of one's friends" (Browning-Aiken, 2005, p. 174). Moll's (1992) work has suggested that these exchanges provided not only assistance for friends and family, but also "contexts in which learning can occur—contexts, for example, where children have ample opportunities to participate in activities with people they trust" (p. 134). When teachers (and preservice teachers) entered into relationships with families during the course of these studies, they too become part of the larger network.

The process of mediation occurs when a person "actively modifies the stimulus situation as part of the process of responding to it" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 14). Thus, as children (and adults) engage in mediated activities—which offer contexts in which to harness signifying events as tools—the space for growth to occur naturally arises. Researchers (González et al., 2005; Moll, 1987, 1997, 2001; Moll et al., 1992; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2005; Moll & Arnot-Hopffer, 2005; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Moll & Greenberg, 1990) have investigated this mediation process at length, and put into play structures to enhance the process for more fertile learning environments for students. An example of a mediating structure is that of university professors explaining methods for conducting ethnographic study in homes to teachers working to improve their practice. As teachers and researchers go into student homes, the information they learn from families is then used as a tool to develop more sound, relevant curriculum inside the schools (Moll, 1997, p. 196).

One of the benefits of mediation in terms of producing effective classroom practices is the facilitation of "strategic connections between two entities (schools and homes)" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 132) that might better cultivate and enrich the thick strands of support for students in schools. After school study groups, which included university faculty and the educators they studied offered opportunities for conversations and the exchange of ethnographic tools with which to enter homes to gather data. This information then fed into curriculum design and helped educators tap into students' home (and prior) knowledge in order to create a more supportive learning environment in their classrooms.

Another vital aspect of research on funds of knowledge is the promise it shows in empowering both educators and students in the construction of knowledge. Because of national and local policies that have the potential to negatively impact student learning (for example, the shift toward high stakes tests that do not originate from the needs and values of the local community and the movement away from bilingual education), it is more important than ever for teachers to "challenge the arbitrary authority of the dominant power structure to determine the essence of education" (Moll & Arnot-Hopffer, 2005, p. 243). The authors have called this "educational sovereignty" for the teachers and students involved in their studies; rather than perceiving this term as a means of separation, it is viewed as a way of cultivating social networks as a way to resist programmatic constraints. Thus, schools become autonomous spaces that can offer more personalized learning settings for the unique population of students who labor within its walls. One way to do this is to acknowledge and "respect and respond to the values of education possessed by Latino families who, along with African Americans, form part of the new majority in schools in many areas of the United States" (p. 243) and reflect the scoiocultural reality of schools.

Like Moll, Lee (1990; Lee, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2003) has investigated ways to draw on prior knowledge developed in homes and communities. Rather than an emphasis on Latino students, however, Lee's work has focused on African American students who bring a vastly different mosaic of talents and home knowledge to the school milieu. In her (1995) study of underachieving African American students, Lee discussed how "signifying" was useful as a springboard for developing an understanding of literary devices used in literature (and in English classrooms), and for improving understanding of the differences between literal and figurative language in texts. According to this work, signifying was, "a form of discourse in the African American community, full of irony, double entendre, satire, and metaphorical language" (p. 612) which is highly valued and has had a long-standing presence in the Black community. Lee has contended that the use of signifying as a mediating (or scaffolding) device in classroom instruction can better facilitate learning in students who struggle with interpreting literary texts. The added bonus of helping students become "better readers and to develop a taste, if you will, for literature in which the manipulation of language for aesthetic effect" (p. 612) provided a further rationale for tapping into this particular piece of home/community knowledge.

Lee (1990) views American society as less "a melting pot, but rather a mosaic of diversity," (p. 48) in which intra-group differences exist as a natural part of a diverse community. In an effort to tap into differences as a means of strength, as opposed to viewing difference as a deficit, Lee (1998) developed what she termed the "Cultural Modeling Project," (a project that draws on African American students' funds of knowledge) which outlined an argument for "culturally responsive performance-based assessments" or PBAs (p. 272). Culturally responsive, performance-based assessments supported two lines of reasoning, the cognitive and the cultural (p. 273-7). The cognitive

argument maintains that "the quality and complexity of knowledge demonstration is directly tied to the task and circumstances of performance" (p. 273). Thus, as culturally responsive assessments are put into place – and, as they draw on culturally based funds of knowledge – students gain efficacy and control over their learning (p. 273-274). The cultural argument is supportive of the notion that students are more willing to take part in a learning task if they feel they are a part of a collective community and if their culture is honored inside the classroom setting.

Drawing on Boykin's (1994) scholarship on what constitutes an "Afro-cultural ethos," Lee has delineated several elements that foster a positive learning environment for African American students. Among these are: spirituality, harmony, movement, verve (high levels of intensity), affect, expressive individualism, communalism, orality, and a social time perspective – which construes time as personified by events (Lee, 1990, p. 275-276). This is not so dissimilar to Moll's work, especially as it relates to acknowledgement of a particular way of knowing, community understandings, and the intersection between school knowledge and cultural funds of knowledge. In addition, Lee and Moll have agreed that without an environment of sensitivity and reciprocity—between and among students and teachers, students and students, and the school and larger community—teaching and learning are considerably diminished.

Development and Learning in Culturally Relevant/Responsive Pedagogy

Ayers (2000) has written, "Education is about opening your eyes and seeing for yourself the world as it really is in all its complexity, and then finding the tools and the strength to participate fully, even to change some of what you find" (p. 1). One of the central problems that preservice teachers face is how to facilitate learning across a wide range of student strengths and weaknesses. Ladson-Billings (1994), Gay (2000), Delpit (1995), and many others have called on teachers to consider the use of "culturally

relevant (or responsive) pedagogy" to meet the needs of diverse students. Ladson-Billings (1995b) has defined culturally relevant pedagogy as a "theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (p. 469).

In the Teaching for Diversity Project (TFD), which is the focus of Ladson-Billings' (2001) book *Crossing Over to Canaan*, the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy are rooted in three propositions: academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (p. 31). These propositions are certainly not enough to ensure that preservice teachers will succeed in the classroom; rather, the opportunity to work with skilled cooperating teachers, to ask questions, and to participate in some serious intellectual grappling are also necessary to foster growth as teachers of diverse students (p. 136-7). Gay (2000) has outlined five core features of culturally responsive teaching.

In employing culturally responsive pedagogy, teachers:

- draw on the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them.
- "teach the whole child" and emphasize academic success as well as cultural competence, critical consciousness, political activism, and responsible community membership.
- recognize that teaching is multidimensional. Emotions, beliefs, values, ethos, opinions, and feelings are scrutinized along with factual information to make curriculum more reflective of and responsive to ethnic diversity.

- understand that teaching is transformative, recognizing "the existing strengths and accomplishments of these students and then enhances them further in the instructional process" (p. 34).
- view learning as a liberating process, capable of releasing the intellect of students of color from the constraining manacles of mainstream canons of knowledge and ways of knowing.

Researchers engaged in conversations about the utility of culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy are careful to avoid lists of teaching techniques or strategies that might constrain teaching practices, as these might have unintended consequences like perpetuating stereotypes. Given this much more holistic approach, however, preservice teachers might find the application of this sort of pedagogical practice intimidating for its lack of explicit structure. However, taken together with the research on funds of knowledge and the wide body of ethnographic studies of teachers who have employed culturally relevant/responsive processes in their classroom practice, preservice teachers might feel encouraged – and perhaps empowered – to use similar practices as well.

2.7 SUMMARY

This chapter employed Joseph Campbell's hero's journey as a metaphor for the journey of preservice teachers studying to become public school educators. In addition, the metaphor served as a way of bringing order to the large bodies of research included in the review. The use of standing research about the utility of and controversy surrounding multicultural education was employed as a larger frame for the review of literature. At the point when this study's participants were entering the field of education, there was little consensus about the nature of effective multicultural education, although excellent models for curricular reform and multicultural approaches existed. What was certain was

that preservice teachers would confront a challenging landscape in terms of pedagogical practice.

The internal frame that guided this study drew on the work of sociocultural theorists, advocates of a funds of knowledge approach to teaching and learning, culturally relevant/responsive practice, and figured worlds. In envisioning this frame, I sought to reconcile the work of researchers who perceived the possibilities in working with diverse students (rather than the problems) with my own intuitive understandings and experiences working with students very different from myself. I conceived of the work of the researchers presented in this review less as discrete islands of information separate from one another, and more as conjoined bodies of water with permeable borders.

James Banks, the prolific and well-regarded multicultural education scholar, has recommended that in order to advance the field further and equip teachers with the skills necessary to thrive in diverse urban landscapes, more empirical studies are needed (Banks, 1995, p. 18). It is from this call – if you will allow me to extend the larger frame of this study even further to include myself as a scholar – that I accepted the task of researcher and writer. In examining the work of multicultural, culturally relevant/responsive, and learning theory scholars and blending that thinking with research about teacher preparation and figured worlds, my goal was to carve out a space for my own body of work. As such, the journey presented in this dissertation study was reflective of not only the preservice teachers I followed from university to public school classrooms, but also my own passage from teacher to teacher educator.

As the topography of public schools continues to grow and change, it is valuable to contemplate the gifts this multiplicity has to offer our local and national communities. Greene (1988) has written, "Without equality, there could be no public space. Without distinctiveness or uniqueness, people would have no need for speech or action to make

themselves understood; because, if they were all identical, mere signs or gestures would be enough" (p. 116). Research on cultural diversity, and preservice teachers' pedagogical response to working with students different from themselves, allows scholars to contemplate and hold up the distinctive differences in lived experiences and cultural knowledge that students bring to public schools.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

The goal of any research that involves the study of and interaction with human participants is to better understand experiences housed in social contexts. Merriam (1998) writes that in interpretive-constructivist research, "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (p. 6). Put another way, Crotty (1998) has defined constructionism as the view that "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (p. 42). Given that the goal of this dissertation was to learn about preservice teachers' varying degrees of efficacy in engaging in multicultural pedagogical practice, and to understand how they internalized theory while engaging in practice, qualitative research methodologies were the most appropriate fit.

Preservice teachers practice their craft in complex, multiple realities. As a result, their ability to negotiate theory and practice is inextricably linked to the schools in which they work, the support systems they have in place, and their understandings about teaching and learning. Any attempt to investigate preservice teachers' awareness of culturally responsive teaching practices and their use of the precepts of multicultural education requires a variety of tools. This study utilized a case study approach as its conceptual framework. In addition to this approach, special attention was given to the support of rigor and trustworthiness in the research design and its implementation.

This chapter delineates the design, conceptual framework, and research methodology for the study. In addition, the data analysis, context of research sites, participants (and researcher positionality), timeline for the project, and limitations follow.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Merriam (1998) has outlined five key assumptions upon which qualitative research is grounded: researchers are "interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed" (p. 6) during the course of a study; the researcher becomes "the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p. 7); the research employs the use of fieldwork (p. 7); the work builds upon abstractions, concepts, or theories and utilizes an inductive approach; and finally, the product of qualitative research is "richly descriptive" (p. 8). One of the assets of qualitative research is that it is "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). By studying humans in their "natural settings" (p. 3), researchers are better able to "make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). The decision to use a qualitative orientation—which allows for the researcher to delve deeply into how preservice teachers view their role as educators of diverse students, conduct the planning of lessons, tap into the rich resources of the communities in which they work, and reflect upon their practice—was a purposeful one.

Qualitative research allows for individuals to give voice to their experience, in essence, for a dialogue to occur between researcher and informant. As Crotty (1998) has put it, "in telling our very own story, it is…the voice of our culture—its many voices, in fact—that is heard in what we say" (p. 64). By implementing a research method that allows for, and even perhaps insists upon, rich descriptions of lived experiences and interactions within the social world, qualitative research gives voice to the struggles, triumphs, and negotiated understandings of preservice teachers learning inside social contexts. Merriam (1998) has discussed several characteristics necessary for an effective qualitative researcher. They are a willingness to tolerate ambiguity, a level of sensitivity

when engaged in human interactions, and the ability to communicate well through speaking, listening, and writing (p. 23-24). These very qualities and practices that can literally "transform the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3) are at the same time criticized and/or deemed "unscientific, or only exploratory, or subjective" (p. 8) in nature.

To fortify an argument for the use of qualitative methods, and to position this study as well thought out in terms of quality, the following considerations by Creswell (1998) about validity were a necessary component to the research design. Trustworthiness in qualitative research was accomplished using:

- prolonged engagement and persistent observation
- triangulation, and the use of multiple data-collection methods, sources, and perspectives
- peer review and debriefing
- clarification of researcher bias
- member checking
- rich, thick description that allows the reader to enter the research
- context (p. 201-203)
- This work sought to avoid the expected pitfalls of qualitative research, like irrelevance, weak analysis, bias, and insufficient interpretation. A consideration of the study's trustworthiness is described in greater detail in further sections.

3.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study drew upon several rich bodies of research as the basis for its conceptual framework. The first frame, culled from the literature on multicultural education (Banks, 1974, 1975, 1994, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c; Banks et al., 2001, 2005; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995) has suggested that employing multicultural approaches are not only an asset in the increasingly diverse schools and classrooms across our country, they

are a necessity in respectfully addressing the students that teachers are charged to look after and instruct. The second body of research mined for this study came from the sociocultural learning theories developed by Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and furthered by more recent socioculturalists and scholars from the field of language arts (Applebee, 1991, 1996; Langer, 1997, 2001; Lee, 1990, 1995, 1998, 2002; Moll & Whitmore, 1993; Richardson, 2003; Smagorinsky & Fly, 1993; Smagorinsky & Johnson, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986).

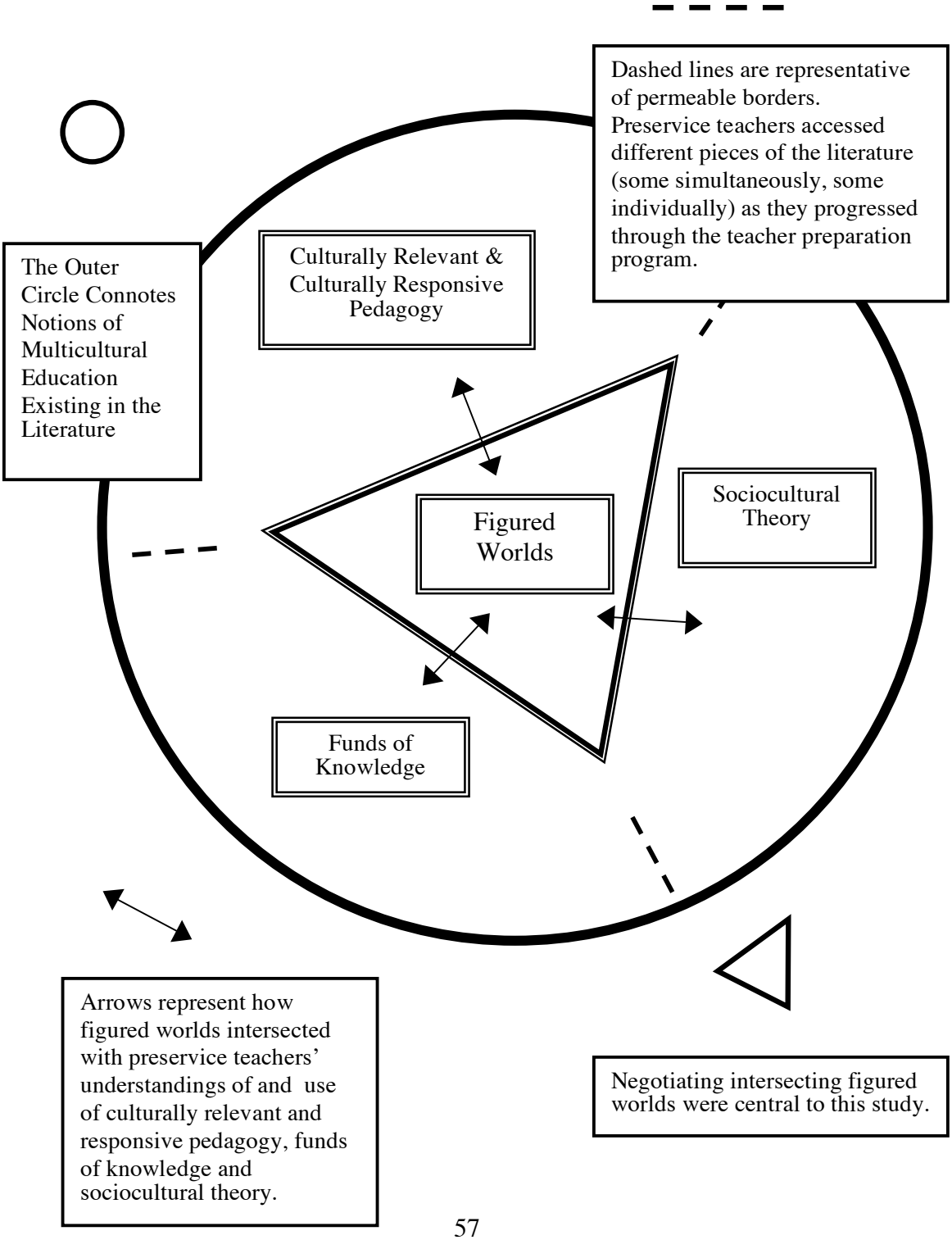
A third frame – tied to the notion of multicultural education – was that of culturally responsive (also called relevant, by Ladson-Billings) pedagogy (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Davis, 2004; Gay, 2000, 2004; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995b, 2001, 2004; Moll, 1987, 1997, 2001; Moll et al., 1992; Sleeter, 1989, 1996a; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). Culturally relevant/responsive teaching has recommended that educators look beyond what is taught and consider how the curriculum is taught. In addition, this body of research has suggested that teaching—while it should certainly be directed at knowledge and skills—is rooted in relationships between teachers, students, and the larger community. The existing work on funds of knowledge (Lee, 1990, 1995, 2003; Moll et al., 1992; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Moll & Greenberg, 1990) is supportive of these notions and offers examples of how to cultivate such collaborative relationships.

While the use of these integrated frames are appropriate for a study centered on preservice teachers' pedagogical practice within culturally diverse contexts, this dissertation additionally employed the work of Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) on figured worlds as a way of understanding the participants' experiences. Figured worlds research has acknowledged that people exist and labor within social contexts and that within these fields of activity, people are positioned by or position

others. We are members of multiple figured worlds simultaneously. Given that the preservice teachers studied entered into a new world as they completed their apprentice teaching semester, the figured worlds work was especially useful at providing context of the research sites – and the additional worlds the participants were privy to. Used as a conceptual frame, research on their requisite figured worlds served as a guide for conversations between/among researcher and participants; data from these conversations then served as a recursive tool that helped tie together the first three bodies of research.

The conceptual framework included (see Illustration 2) served to tease out greater understanding about how preservice teachers move from their role of learner to teacher/learning practitioner, with a particular interest in tools they tapped into (like culturally relevant/responsive practices, the use of a funds of knowledge approach, and sociocultural theory) to ease their journey from student to teacher. By employing the research methodology that follows, this study sought a clearer understanding of the relationship between preservice teachers' exposure to educational theory at the university and their employment of that theory in constructing meaningful lessons for the diverse students in their care once they entered the classroom.

Illustration 2: Conceptual Framework



3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY—CASE STUDY

In her description of case study research, Merriam (1998) has explained,

> case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation (p. 19).

It is this quest for understanding that made the case study approach an appropriate methodology for this dissertation project. Stake (1995) has concurred, noting "We do not study a case primarily to understand other cases. Our first obligation is to understand this one case" (p. 4). This "emphasis on uniqueness," (p. 8) provided a singular context from which research could then spring. Knowledge gleaned from case study research has the potential to provide information different from any other design methodology, and is particularly useful in answering "how" and "why" questions (Merriam, 1998, p. 32) not necessarily accessible when employing a different methodology. Case study research also allowed for grappling with issues that were "not simple and clean, but intricately wired to political, social, historical, and especially personal contexts" (Stake, 1995, p. 17).

Given that this dissertation project sought greater understanding about the burgeoning capacity of preservice teachers to employ multicultural pedagogical practice, a conceived (and bounded) case was a necessity. The selected case study members were buttressed by several different contexts. Among these were the university classroom, where preservice teachers studied and contemplated theory, subject area methods, multicultural education practices, and a distinct expertise in a core subject—in this case, English/language arts. Fieldwork provided a second context, where preservice teachers

interacted with and learned with/from students and other educators. There was also the largely personal context that reflected each preservice teacher's unique history and life experience and served as a frame for his/her perception of the world (in general) and the role of teacher within a classroom (more specific).

By using a case study approach, this dissertation hoped to gain greater clarity in how preservice constructed meaning and negotiated what they learned at the university once placed in the practitioner's setting—the school. Recognizing that often times "the interpretations of the researcher are likely to be emphasized more than the interpretations of those people studied" (Stake, 1995, p. 12), a goal of this study was to include the varied, multiple realities that existed across the case. While the researcher was certainly the person writing the dissertation, it was my hope that the lived realities of the preservice teachers portrayed in this study contributed to its overall analysis, in addition to our collective understanding.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection occurred in the fall of 2006, and followed procedures outlined by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. Data gathered from participants began after explicit permission was granted, and the researcher offered a detailed explanation of the project's aims and processes to informants.

Qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993a, 1993b; Egon G. Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Huberman & Miles, 1983; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) requires that multiple data sources serve as the well from which to draw out understanding. This dissertation pulled from a variety of data sources, made relevant by their interconnectedness to the research design and the study's governing questions. Generally speaking, data evolved from the following

sources: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts. Details for gathering data follow.

Interviews

Two layers of semi-structured, audio-taped interviews were utilized for this study. At the study's onset, interviews with professors who participate in the professional development sequence for preservice language arts teachers helped frame the researcher's understanding about how multicultural education was approached in university courses. While the professors themselves were not the focus of the study, this set of interviews helped orient and offer context about the kind of exposure preservice teachers gained regarding pedagogical practice as it related to the diverse student population of our local school district.

Interviews with the preservice teachers themselves served an entirely different purpose. These interviews, conducted at both the onset and completion of data gathering, endeavored to tease out preservice teachers' understandings about culturally responsive teaching practices and the role these understandings played in their construction of individual lessons and larger curricular units. Because culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy hinges on the relationships teachers cultivate between themselves and the students with whom they work, special attention was paid to preservice teachers' perceptions about their interactions with students during the apprentice (student) teaching semester. The first interview occurred in early fall as preservice teacher participants were preparing for their apprentice teaching semester, and served to orient the researcher to the informants' experiences with and understandings of culturally relevant/responsive practices. Participants were asked to bring syllabi, texts, and other relevant artifacts that represented their understanding of multicultural education to the interview. These items were noted, and if pertinent to the study's governing questions, borrowed and mined as

data sources. The second, follow-up interview occurred in the spring semester, following their apprentice teaching and offered opportunities for member checking and clarifying questions to be asked and answered. As a result, the interview process served to book-end the data collection process.

The use of interviews offered a sense of clarity not necessarily evident when a researcher goes into schools to collect observation data. In support of interviews as a data source, Patton (1990) has noted several things we cannot observe, like

> feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (p. 196).

By employing a semi-structured interview format, participants were able to engage in a more natural form of give and take found more regularly in conversation than in an information-gathering interview. Using both structured and semi-structured questions during the course of the interview, the researcher was able to "respond to the situation at hand, to the worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). Thus, the interview relied less on a script or agenda, and more on the organic nature of an informal conversation. This structure (or lack of a rigid structure) offered the researcher myriad opportunities for the multiple realities of participants to rise to the surface and for participants to work as participating agents in the discovery (and discussion) process.

Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim and offered to participants for member checking and review. Member checking was integral to the construction of a trustworthy research design, but more than that, it allowed for clarification and validation of information transcribed by the researcher (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Stake,

1995). Member checking also served as a form of triangulation; by asking participants to look over "interview transcripts, analytical thoughts, and/or drafts of the final report" (Creswell, 1998, p. 203) I ensured that the participant's ideas and thoughts were represented appropriately. During the course of the interviews, handwritten notes were taken to further elucidate the interview setting, context, and participant's mood (when noteworthy). Handwritten notes also offered the opportunity to jot down extending questions or make connections between and among interviews with other participants. Interviews took place at the participant's choice of setting, but generally occurred at the schools where they were working or in conveniently agreed upon settings.

Classroom Observations

In addition to interviews, observations in the field provided a rich data source for study. The benefit of observation was the "personal capture of the experience where researchers could interpret it, recognize its contexts, puzzle the many meanings while still there, and pass along an experiential, naturalistic account" (Stake, 1995, p. 44) to others afterwards. This also afforded the researcher with the opportunity to make the strange familiar, and the familiar strange (Erickson, F., 1973) , and to consider the significance of exchanges among people in what might appear in the "invisibility of, everyday life" (p. 121). Erickson (1986) has noted that the use of participant observation in research is especially appropriate when the following conditions exist: specificity is an aim of the study; meaning-making of particular actors is a necessary component; when we cannot hold any one variable (as in experiments, surveys, etc.) constant since there are continuing and changing points of contrast; and when causal links inside the situation may be connected to situations in other contexts (p. 121). This attempt to portray everyday occurrences and the negotiations of participants in a study was crucial for

meaning-making and analysis, thus validating the use of observation as a methodological tool.

There are drawbacks to observation. Experienced researchers caution those engaging in participant observation to avoid too much intrusion into the spaces of study participants, and to try not "to draw attention to themselves or their work" (Stake, 1995, p. 45). Glesne (1999) has concurred, saying, "you are not in the research setting to preach or evaluate, nor to compete for prestige or status. Your focus is on your research participants, and you work to stay out of the limelight" (p. 46). Thus, while it was impossible to cloak myself in invisibility in the classroom, I endeavored to appear as unobtrusive as possible, sitting on the periphery of the class space and conducting note-taking activities as discreetly and quietly as possible. Data gleaned from the observations offered insight on how preservice teachers were implementing culturally responsive strategies, and served as a starting point for discussions about pedagogy during member checking later in the study.

Collection of Artifacts

In addition to interviews and observations, data was drawn from participant artifacts (lesson and unit plans, classroom handouts, email reflections, student work, and photographs of classroom projects and activities), email correspondence between researcher and participants, researcher observation notes, and field note reflections. Observations of preservice teachers occurred weekly during the fall (apprentice teaching) semester. Other resources included copies of the state mandated curriculum (Texas Essential Skills and Knowledge—or TEKS) and district level curriculum planning guides (Instructional Planning Guides—or IPGs). The utility of artifacts was that they served as concrete mementoes and facilitated triangulation during the data analysis process.

Researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Erlandson et al., 1993a; E. G. Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Merriam, 1998) have acknowledged that no single piece of data is substantial for drawing conclusions. Indeed, "single items of information contribute little to an understanding of the context of the study unless they are enriched through triangulation" (Erlandson et al., 1993a, p. 138). In an effort to strengthen the "reliability as well as internal validity" (Merriam, 1998, p. 207) of this project, artifact collection occurred throughout and was drawn on and considered during the interview and observation processes that occurred as a part of the study. By employing data sources that allowed for the interaction between participants and researcher and included artifacts salient to the research question, opportunities for rich description and comprehensive analysis occurred as a natural result.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Merriam (1998) has written, "data analysis is a process of making sense out of data" (p. 192) whereby researchers attempt to group together information in categories, taxonomies, or themes in order to draw conclusions and gain understandings during the data analysis process. Many researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Huberman & Miles, 1983; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) have recommended that data analysis occur either simultaneously, while data collection is occurring or soon after the data collection process has ended. Researchers like Miles and Huberman (1994), Erlandson, et. al (1993a) and Erikson (1986) have recommended the use of journaling during the research process, to facilitate meaning-making and open up the doors of opportunity for analysis to alight. A reflexive journal was kept throughout the study's duration to guide the analysis process. In addition, the following process—outlined by Huberman and Miles (1983) aided in organizing and analyzing data:

- coding (to facilitate organizing and theming of data)
- policing (to help detect bias and keep the analysis on track)
- dictating field notes (to enrich descriptions)
- connoisseurship (to support researcher knowledge of the issues occurring in the context of the study and its site)
- progressive focusing and funneling (to help sift the data as the study unfolds)
- interim site summaries (to offer written reflections of the study's progress)
- memoing (to note emerging issues during the course of the study), and
- outlining (to better standardize the narrative format).

Several steps of this analysis process (connoisseurship, site summaries, dictating field notes, memoing, and outlining) occurred in the reflexive journal alongside my personal thoughts, details, questions, and general observations. The coding, policing, and progressive focusing/funneling existed in stand-alone documents written up throughout the data collection and analysis process. Thus, as further information unfolded through the progression of the study, a simultaneous coding, policing, and winnowing of the data emerged as well.

- Finding ways to make sense of the large mass of data that results from case study research was further exacerbated by the need to prove trustworthiness in analysis, particularly in works that employ qualitative methods. Erlandson and his colleagues (1993) have detailed the following techniques to aid in the development of trustworthiness in naturalistic inquiry:
- prolonged engagement (to help build trust and offer context during a study)
- persistent observation (to provide depth and help researchers distinguish between relevancies and irrelevancies collected during the research process)
- triangulation (to build credibility, one needs multiple data sources)

- referential adequacy materials (to provide context, materials like audio-taped recordings and photographs help situate the settings and substantiate data analysis, interpretation, and audits)
- peer debriefing (to help ground the researcher and offer objective points of view)
- member checking (to provide participants the opportunity to test researcher interpretations gathered during the data collection/analysis process)
- reflexive journal (to support transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study)
- thick description (to use all of the senses to capture the context and unfolding events of the study)
- purposive sampling (to offer specificity)
- an audit trail (to support the steps in the research process and provide others with documentation for study dependability and confirmability)

These considerations – coupled with the data analysis methods detailed by Miles and Huberman – played an integral role in generating trustworthiness of the study and the quality of its design. This particular data collection and analysis initially blended interview, email and personal correspondence data, and reflective journals into three separate data sets, corresponding to each of the preservice teacher participants. Data were read to ascertain initial themes. As recurring ideas or topics emerged, the three separate files were merged into one set and coded, chunked together by emerging themes. After folding in additional artifacts – lesson plans, interview transcripts from professors, observation notes, and the reflexive journal, the data were manually coded and preliminary meaning was generated to determine conceptual explanations of the case study. Triangulation was built into the data collection and analysis process to secure trustworthiness. By offering such safeguards as peer debriefing, member checking, and

an audit trail, the conclusions drawn during analysis amply ensured that triangulation had occurred.

It is the responsibility of all researchers to maintain ethical standards throughout the research process. This was of particular importance in a study such as this that relies on the contribution of others – their thinking, their feelings, and their practices – to appropriately address the research question. It was the goal of this study to provide readers "with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author's conclusion 'makes sense'" (Merriam, 1998, p. 199). By using the tools delineated in this section, and the inherent sensitivity and humanity I carried with me into this study, I hope to have provided an analysis that was comprehensive in scope yet still mindful of the limitations of working as I was, in the capacity of human as instrument.

3.6 CONTEXT OF RESEARCH SITES

The context of this study existed in two separate spheres. The first was a large flagship university in the Southwest; the second, a thriving urban school district housed within a central Texas city that served an increasingly diverse (in terms of race and ethnicity as well as socioeconomic status) student population. The first part of the study followed a cohort of preservice teachers entering into their final (apprentice teaching) semester prior to gaining their secondary English/language arts certification. As a requirement for graduation (and in the case of post-baccalaureate students, their teaching credentials), students were required to attend an accelerated methods course for the first three weeks of their apprentice teaching semester. This course took place on the university campus, and laid the foundation for the apprenticeship that followed.

The proposed research study investigated the university faculty instrumental in preparing preservice teachers for this immersion experience, with focused attention on

how they approached issues of diversity, multicultural education, and reflective practice in their courses. The professors who acted as informants in the study were committed to preparing educators for the complex world they enter once graduating from and/or completing the credentialing process and had varying degrees of sensitivity regarding culturally responsive practice. Several sections of the College of Education's mission statement were salient to and supportive of this study. The mission reads:

> We seek to prepare education professionals who understand the social conditions that shape the lives of today's youth; appreciate the diversity of today's youth and can teach, practice, and lead in a multicultural society that is Texas and the United States; and, have a solid practical foundation through extensive field experience ("Mission of the College," 2006).

How this mission plays out in the realities of classrooms in the local community is not well documented, but clearly the aspiration exists.

After the completion of the three-week course held on the university campus, preservice teachers continued their semester in the large, urban district that surrounded the university. The makeup of the district, according to the most recently released data (for the 2004-2005 school year) showed that of the almost 80,000 students, 13.4% were African American, 54.7% were Hispanic (Latino), 29% were White, .2% were Native American, and 2.8% were Asian American/Pacific Islander. 58.7% of the total number of students were considered economically disadvantaged, and 22.8% were classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) (Texas Education Agency, 2006). Further details about the schools in which the preservice teachers completed their apprentice teaching are offered in Chapter Four. The data, analysis, and narrative that arose from this study reflected the unique qualities of the school sites involved and of the preservice teachers' attempts to employ practices compatible with the diverse students within their care.

3.7 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

This study included the voices and perspectives of six participants; there were three preservice teachers, and three university professors. Initially, there were five preservice teachers participating, but after initial interviews, two of these participants elected to leave the study. The preservice teachers who agreed to participate were chosen based on their interest in the over-arching goals of multicultural education and their passion for connecting with students who were different from themselves. Of the three preservice teachers who participated in the study, two were White; one of those was reared in a middle-class home, and the other in a lower-class home. The third participant, a Latina, was reared in an upper middle-class household; all participants were women. Greater detail about the unique characteristics of the research participants follows in Chapter Four.

Three professors active in the professional development sequence participated in this study. While they were not be the focus of the study, information gleaned from semi-structured interviews and from (university) classroom observations offered context for the study. The professors also served as a valuable resource for triangulation as data was analyzed. This was particularly necessary considering this study's focus was on how preservice teachers negotiated what they learned in the university classroom once the reality of practice met them in public schools. Through data sources like syllabi, course textbooks, and class assignments, a larger portrait of the professors' expectations and commitment to multicultural education evolved and governed many of the follow-up conversations that occurred between preservice teachers and the author of this study.

3.8 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

In his discussion about how positionality impacts epistemology, Takacs has noted, "our views may be constrained by the narrow range of experiences we have had" (Takacs, 2002, p. 170). Like other researchers considering positionality and how that plays out in scholarly work (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Danielewicz, 2001; Delpit, 1995; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004), Takacs has reminded us that we are all constrained and shaped—to some degree—by our unique understandings of the world. These understandings are the product of our lived experiences as teachers, scholars, and humans who exist in a politicized, context-laden world. He has discussed,

Through recognizing and analyzing the cultures in which we are positioned, and that therefore cannot help but mold our worldviews, we take steps to become more aware and even more objective. We can grasp at objectivity only by examining as many subjective perspectives as possible, and we come to know the world more fully by knowing how we know the world (Takacs, 2002, p. 170).

My own attempt to gain awareness of, and name my unique worldview was a struggle that I have only begun to own up to in recent years. As a White, middle class, college-educated woman, I recognize the privilege of my position in the world. There are certain doors open to me that I have consistently taken for granted; the ability to walk unencumbered through life without concern that I am being judged or misunderstood because of language barriers, beliefs, or ethnicity has in many ways made my journey one of ease. I am a member of the (White, middle-class, Protestant) group who holds power in this country. That said, my experiences growing up and coming of age in an increasingly conservative political climate tempered my worldview to a large degree.

When I was very young, my mother was divorced and our small family was pushed to the brink of collapse economically; this forced us to leave our home and move in with my grandparents for an extended period of time in order for my mother to get back on her feet emotionally and economically. The late 1960's was a time when the word "divorced" carried with it a stigma that kept my sister and I from being invited to classmates' homes. After the repeated condemnation of church leaders regarding the sins of divorce, my mother decided to stop attending religious services at our local church altogether. Outside of our extended family and my mother's extraordinary boss, there were few people willing to extend a helping hand. A precocious child replete with a great love of learning I found myself successful in school; this success became my bargaining tool against the prejudices of fellow classmates and their parents concerning my mother's marital status, and no doubt shapes my thinking as both an educator – and teacher educator – today. Having viewed the world from the periphery, I labored to better "blend in" to the larger population; this early awareness of the stratification in place in schools was an artifact I carried into the classroom as I learned to teach.

When working as a classroom teacher, I always connected with those students who were in some way marginalized by the larger school population. This manifested in several ways, and included students from impoverished homes, minority students, and students who stuck out as somehow "left of center." My research interests reflect my own grappling as an educator with how to provide room for equity and inclusion to emerge in the classroom environment without marginalizing those students not yet ready to coexist in such a democratic space. Because I spent eight of my ten years as a classroom teacher in high poverty and high minority schools, I have deeply entrenched ideas about the value and utility of culturally responsive practices; this is not some high-minded ideal, but rather something realized through years of practical experience. I

simply cannot stomach the color-blind notion that students are students, and what works with one will work with them all. Students are as unique and multi-faceted as our larger adult population, and to acknowledge and privilege only one group of learners (read: White, middle-class) is to diminish the diversity and unique cultural knowledge of the other students.

As teachers, we can choose to reinforce the hegemony that plagues our larger society and often serves to perpetuate institutionalized racism, (Apple, 2004; Sleeter, 1989; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995) or we can work against the status quo and attempt to subvert the larger system. I chose the latter and found myself in my last post as a public school teacher marginalized by several colleagues who were deeply entrenched in their own deficit thinking regarding students. As I found fewer and fewer safe spaces in which to expand upon and indeed, nurture my thinking and improve my pedagogical practice, I chose to return to the university. I brought with me a belief that all students are unique and should be valued for their precious—and singular—characteristics, even if those gifts are not readily apparent when plotted out on a bell curve or lumped together with their peers in a report of the school's yearly progress.

As a researcher and novice scholar interested in equipping secondary English/language arts preservice teachers with the tools they will need to engage with and nurture students in their intellectual growth, it is necessary for me to acknowledge my own preferences and experiences as a classroom teacher. This calls on me to consider the context in which preservice teachers are coming of age today—a context where the external mandates from the No Child Left Behind have produced state and local responses that I disagree with, namely with an increasingly narrowed (and in some cases) scripted curriculum (McNeil, 2000, 2005; Popham, 2005; Sloan, 2005; Valenzuela, 2005). I believe that culturally responsive practices have utility in fortifying student

learning (and thus, have an ameliorative effect in keeping those who support scripted, often test-preparation curricula at bay), and also sowing the seeds for a larger conversation about power, democracy, and social justice.

These understandings no doubt impacted the types of conversations I had with preservice teachers throughout the course of this study and how I couched my findings. However, given my larger commitment and goal of understanding how preservice teachers make sense of the notions of multicultural education and how these notions play out in their apprentice teaching experience, I was willing to embrace a divergent perspective—and even protect the space in which differences of opinion were born—throughout this research process. Greene writes,

> I believe there ought to be more openings to the surrounding world. It is difficult to imagine worthwhile questions arising without such openings. It is difficult to imagine students discovering what they think and what they do not yet know if there is no space of conversation, no space of engagement in diversity (1986, p. 73).

It is my hope that despite my own epistemological perspective and understandings about teaching and learning that I was able to remain open, honest, and ethical in how I constructed the narrative of this dissertation. My commitment to difference governed the choices I made in how to construct arguments and analyze data; the desire to construct a meaningful representation of each of this study's participants guided my writing.

3.9 STUDY TIMELINE AND PILOT RESEARCH

This study was initially designed to begin in the late summer of 2006, once permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was granted. Because of a delay in that process, initial interviews did not occur until early fall (2006) with the commencement of observations and artifact collection. Follow-up interviews and email correspondence occurred from the spring to summer of 2007. Data analysis, writing, and

further member checking occurred in the summer of 2007 and continued until the completion of the dissertation project.

While there was no distinct, related pilot study that corresponded with this research project, a couple of preliminary studies contributed to the origination of the proposed study idea. When I entered this doctoral program, I was interested in how teachers created community and rapport in their classrooms and how this impacted student learning and pedagogical practice. I was initially drawn to the research about small (high) schools, but lacking such models in our immediate vicinity began investigating the research on smaller learning communities (which was being implemented in nearby school districts). That study evolved into a paper that was later defended as a part of my doctoral candidacy exam process. While seeking understanding about how smaller learning communities—and the breaking up of a large high school into smaller "houses"—contributed to the larger school culture proved informative, it did not pique my interest to such a degree that I sought more knowledge by means of a full-blown dissertation study. Rather, it was my work as a facilitator, supervising preservice secondary English/language arts teachers in the field that pushed my attention toward an area of research that I believe will hold my interest for years to come.

In 2005, in an effort to gain understanding about how preservice teachers saw themselves—as teachers, as students, and as co-constructors of knowledge—I conducted a study that later evolved into a presentation at the annual American Association for Teaching and Curriculum (AATC) conference in the fall of 2005 entitled, Emerging agency in pre-service teachers: How journals and collaboration contribute to growth.

Data from this study were used for scholarly presentations at various conferences, including the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in Nashville in 2006, and the American Educational Research Association in 2007 and 2008. The paper presented

at NCTE was entitled Negotiating theory and practice: Developing a "funds of knowledge" approach to teaching and learning with preservice English teachers. Two papers were presented at AERA in 2007, Preservice teachers as "rethinkers:" How reflective practice reinforces the development of culturally responsive educators and Taking the plunge: Preservice teachers' investigate their school community's funds of knowledge to expand their culturally responsive practice. Also developed from this data set, the paper entitled Preservice teachers as rethinkers: The development of culturally responsive educators was presented at AERA in 2008.

Currently, I am developing an article for publication co-authored with Caroline Sullivan as a means of making this work more public. This article, *Preservice teachers as rethinkers: The development of culturally responsive educators* uses a frame developed by Gillette (1996) that places preservice teachers upon a continuum of efficacy, ranging from "resistors" to "rethinkers" to "culturally sensitive" educators. The work examines the culturally responsive practice of both White and Latino teachers, and concludes that enacting culturally sensitive pedagogical practice is equally challenging to preservice teachers, regardless of race or ethnicity.

This dissertation study has in many ways produced more questions than answers; in the development of the topic and in interactions with preservice teachers I anticipated far different pedagogical practices than were actually realized. With that said, this project did allow me to hone my skills as a researcher and has forced me to question my own practice as a teacher educator – particularly in terms of how I will address multiculturalism with future students.

Through the use of a qualitative case study approach, the purpose of this study was to uncover preservice teachers' understandings of multiculturalism and their use of culturally responsive, culturally relevant, and funds of knowledge approaches with their

students. The operational details that govern this study are presented in this chapter, as well as guidelines for maintaining trustworthiness during the research process.

3.10 LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations of this study was that preservice teachers were in a sense "borrowing" their cooperating teacher's students for the semester that they completed their apprentice teaching. Because of this, participants were influenced – not only by their cooperating teacher, but by the larger school culture – and were largely unable to fully implement lessons designed to include culturally responsive teaching practices. The school district in which preservice teachers completed their apprentice teaching was reliant upon instructional planning guides (IPGs) for teachers; within these guides were a scope and sequence that included samples of lesson plan ideas and a timeline for particular pieces of literature and units of study. According to the district, the intent of the IPGs was to ensure that students were given an equitable (and stable) curriculum; a second rationale for the IPGs was to ensure that if students moved from one school to another (a regular occurrence at some of the schools in the district) they did not miss particular pieces of literature while repeating others.

These were understandable goals, but largely limited preservice teachers' ability to fully produce creative and relevant curricular units that tapped into the funds of knowledge drawn from the homes of their particular students. Rather, the IPGs served in many ways to limit the preservice teachers' ingenuity, particularly those who were assigned to schools struggling to meet the demands of "adequate yearly progress" as defined by No Child Left Behind. Schools that are labeled (or just above) the low performing mark tended to reflect a more rigid interpretation of the planning guides. In some instances entire grade levels were teaching the same content in the same manner on

the same day. As preservice teachers were guests in their cooperating teachers' classrooms (as was the researcher), the methods and teaching strategies they employed hinged on their cooperating teachers' approval. Thus, even those preservice teachers who fully supported the notions of multicultural education, culturally responsive pedagogy, and socioconstructivist principles found it difficult to implement these notions in the figured world of their classrooms

An additional limitation of this dissertation was in its methodology. By selecting an interpretivist epistemology, which sought understanding as its primary goal, I felt conflicted at times. There were many instances when the participants asked what I thought of their practice or what they should do to change a particular lesson to cater to their student population. My natural response in that situation is to offer advice once it is solicited. In an effort to remain neutral, however, I typically bounced the question back on the preservice teachers instead. As a result, in the process of analyzing data, I recognized that I did not push the preservice teachers to reflect on moments when they might have gained entry into meaningful conversations with students about the myriad inequalities that existing in schools when these topics arose. Part of this was the by-product of my own status as a novice in the realm (and figured world) of scholarly work; part was again my effort to not inflict my opinions on these young teachers and tinge the results.

I discovered an additional limitation after my first round of interviews with the participants; although they had each taken a variety of literature classes, methods courses, and a multicultural education course, the participants were not exposed to the same slice of the research that appears in my governing study questions. The terms "culturally responsive," "culturally relevant," and "funds of knowledge" were outside of their common vernacular. Once I offered the preservice teachers examples of what these

might look like – and adjusted my antenna during classroom observations – I discovered moments that reflected these types of pedagogical practice. However, much of the conversation centering on multicultural education and its attending practices were kept on a cursory level during conversations with the preservice teachers. Because I was no longer working as their University Facilitator (as I had the semester prior to data collection) I felt it fitting not to layer on even more expectations and responsibilities for the participants when they were already attempting to please the professor overseeing their practice teaching, their cooperating teachers, and their new University Facilitators.

By approaching this work using an interpretive inquiry method and serving as its principal investigator, it is possible that in my attempts to "understand and explain human and social reality" (Crotty, 1998, p. 66-67) I was in some manner privileging some events while lessening the importance of others. Certainly, methods of triangulation were put into place to maintain the integrity of this qualitative case study as delineated by Erlandson, et al (1993a) such as: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, member checking, reflexive journal, and thick description. As is the case in most research projects that rely on qualitative research methods, conclusions drawn are in large part a subjective reality filtered by the principal researcher. As I discuss in Chapter Four, we carry past figured worlds with us when we embark upon the new; having gained entry into the figured world of scholarly research, I no doubt carried with me biases and assumptions reflective of my own lived experiences.

A final consideration concerns the use of the hero's journey as a metaphor for the process preservice teachers go through while learning to teach. While this served as a helpful tool in organizing the dissertation, it is possible too that the metaphor limited my thinking about other means of presenting this data. Thus, having the structure of the journey as a guiding feature during the writing and data analysis process might have

inhibited my thinking. I endeavored to present the data in as objective a light as manageable; my hope is that the hero's journey structure added to the process, and lent a literary quality to the narrative.

3.11 SUMMARY

This study sought to make use of a rigorous, trustworthy qualitative case study approach to gain understanding about how preservice teachers connected the ideas and theories put forth in the university classroom to their experience in the field during the apprentice teaching semester. The process for conducting and analyzing an effective qualitative case study were detailed and justified in this chapter. One of the guiding principles of this study was "to take a particular case and come to know it well" (Stake, 1995, p. 8). This goal of particularization is one of the hallmarks of qualitative case study research. For the purposes of this study – a study that sought to root out the unique relationships between theory and practice and tease out the manner in which preservice teachers made sense of and internalized notions of culturally responsive pedagogy in a time of increasing standardization – a case study approach provided the most sound methodology.

Chapter IV: Results – Tests and Rewards in the Figured World of Schools

This study sought to document the experiences and understandings of three secondary English/language arts preservice teachers as they completed their final requirement for certification, the apprentice teaching semester. In addition to the original conceptual framework delineated in Chapter Three, this work relied on the notion of figured worlds, developed by Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) and built upon by education scholars (Fecho, Graham, & Hudson-Ross, 2005; Luttrell & Parker, 2001; Robinson, 2007; Rubin, 2007; Urrieta, 2007a) to contextualize the data and examine the work of the participants. Figured worlds, the abstract spaces in which people co-exist (Holland et al., 1998), occur in all aspects of life but are noticeably demonstrated in the world of schools, where work with others exists and people are positioned according to their task or an existing hierarchy. Preservice teachers resided in several simultaneous figured worlds: the university classroom; their field placement school; their work, home, and social circles. Like the students with whom they worked, the participants carried figured worlds from their past with them into schools. The analysis that follows considers the intersection of these divergent figured worlds as participants completed their apprentice teaching semester.

For the sake of continuity with the earlier chapters, it is important to briefly revisit the metaphor discussed previously, the hero's journey. Having had exposure to a host of theoretical and practical tools during their coursework at the university, the participants moved into the figured worlds of their individual schools. Much like the "special world" of the hero's journey, the preservice teachers in this interpretive case study – Jenny, Sandra, and Matilda – were guided by mentors (their cooperating teachers, professors,

and university facilitators) and subjected to a series of tests. Their ability to flourish in that new setting varied among the participants; each brought unique skills and perspectives to the experience and drew on different artifacts over the course of the study. The completion of the study surfaced a burgeoning agency among the preservice teachers; having completed their tasks, the participants prepared to move on to their next figured worlds, the schools where they had accepted their first teaching posts.

4.1 Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

What follows is a reminder of the original conceptual framework upon which this study was developed. The framework was drawn from four primary fields: sociocultural theory, culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and funds of knowledge research. These theories were foundational in that they both resonated with, and indeed were drawn upon by those elaborating on figured worlds research in the literature. In light of these connections, the figured worlds work was employed to some degree as a mediating tool between and among the other frames.

Sociocultural theory, derived from the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and built upon by other scholars in the field of education (Bakhtin, 1981; Bourdieau, 1977; Freire, 2005; Lee, 1995; Moll, 1997, 2001; Newell et al., 2001; Smagorinsky & Fly, 1993; Smagorinsky & Johnson, 2003), provided the foundational frame for the results that follow. This study acknowledges that thought and language are necessary tools for both teachers and students to employ, not only to increase literacy in secondary classrooms but to scaffold learning and build upon unique lived experiences. Learning involves the mediation of "material and symbolic objects that are culturally constructed, historical in origin and social in content" (Scribner, 1990, p. 92). As such, the preservice teachers involved in this project were obligated not only to engage with their students on an

interpersonal level, but to draw on students' prior knowledge to develop pedagogically appropriate methods of instruction.

A second frame, that of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000), supports sociocultural theory and additionally obligates teachers to select pedagogical practices that build on students' strengths and cultural knowledge. Similar to research on culturally responsive teaching, Ladson-Billings' (1994) development of culturally relevant pedagogy is rooted in three propositions: academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (p. 31). These scholars and others (Banks, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 2001b, 2003, 2004; Sleeter, 1996a; Sleeter & Stillman, 2005) call on teachers to acknowledge that systemic inequity exists in public schools, and to work toward social justice inside their classrooms.

Finally, recognizing that drawing on home knowledge can boost students' in-school learning, this study employs Moll's (2000) funds of knowledge as a third frame. By building on students' skills, expertise, and interests, preservice teachers are able to offer students a sense of control over their learning. An additional benefit to this approach is that it can steer young teachers away from a deficit thinking orientation; tapping into home knowledge also honors the unique cultures and lived experiences of students. By blending these separate bodies of research and revisiting them throughout the data analysis process, an attempt is made to answer the primary questions addressed in this dissertation study.

The research questions for this study were designed to uncover the degree to which preservice teachers adopted and employed concepts to which they were introduced in their teacher preparation program. The first question, "How are understandings about multicultural education evidenced in preservice teachers' practice?" was related to the themes that focused on the figured worlds of schools and the available tools for teaching

and learning that the participants encountered. The second question, "In what manner are preservice teachers employing culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy and funds of knowledge approach during their apprentice teaching semester?" tied closely to their coursework at the university and to both the tools and burgeoning agency themes. Directed by these research questions, three themes salient to a discussion about figured worlds, sociocultural theory, culturally relevant/responsive pedagogical practice, and funds of knowledge emerged. In the next section, these themes and sub-themes are introduced and further elaborated upon in subsequent sections of Chapter Four.

4.2 BLENDING THEMES: FIGURED WORLDS, TOOLS, AND AGENCY

Drawing on multiple data sources (transcribed audio-taped interviews, classroom observations and field notes, lesson plans, classroom assignments, reflective writings, and other school [university and public school] artifacts) and employing the use of qualitative data analysis as outlined by Huberman and Miles (1983) three themes were developed. Through the use of a reflexive journal, data analysis occurred both during and upon completion of the study. Data were initially organized and sorted by participant and separated by type (interview, observation notes, etc.); an initial coding occurred, that reflected a cursory understanding of global themes existing in the data. After discovering repeated concepts, phrases, or ideas, all of the electronically held data sources were merged into one large, color-coded (by participant) file. What developed were organized patterns that elicited three emerging themes that connected directly to the original conceptual framework. These themes were developed and supported with specific examples drawn from the data sources and supplemented by the reflexive journal and artifacts that were not held electronically, like handouts from classes or student work.

The themes further illustrate the complex world of schooling within which preservice teachers learned their craft and involved: adapting to their school placements;

employing pedagogical tools and wrestling with issues of social justice; tapping lessons learned in their teacher preparation program; developing as change agents in the classroom, resisting the status quo; and addressing the "wobble" in their literacy practices. As preservice teachers adapted to their new environment and role as educators, they were able to see themselves in a new light as teachers and to some degree, agents of change.

The first theme, entitled *Negotiating the Figured World of Schools*, acknowledges how preservice teachers are impacted by the unique and often diverse figured worlds to which they belong. This theme additionally considers how positioning within the figured world of schools affects both teachers and students. The second theme, *Acknowledging the Tools*, elaborates on preservice teachers' notions of multiculturalism and explores their willingness (and unwillingness) to enact literacy events that support (or do not support) social justice. Additionally, this theme explores preservice teachers' difficulty in managing a largely canonical curriculum and matching appropriate strategies to teach particular skills, concepts and ideas required in an English classroom. The final theme, *Burgeoning Agency*, describes the tentative successes preservice teachers realize as they begin relying more heavily on sociocultural tools and students as the "more knowledgeable other" (Vygotsky, 1986). This theme also highlights resistance to the status quo and a blossoming advocacy stance for students by their preservice teachers. By adopting and mediating the appropriate tools of the figured world of the classroom, young teachers blossom in terms of agency; positioned as educators rather than students they can move with confidence into their first placements as in-service teachers.

4.3 REVISITING THE HERO'S JOURNEY

At State University, fieldwork was a regular part of the teacher preparation program; preservice teachers were required to spend varying amounts of time (depending

on the course) in schools for each semester leading up to their apprentice teaching. Despite this exposure, the preservice teachers participating in this study encountered a certain degree of dissonance between what they experienced as observers in the field – often spending no more than a few hours a week in schools – and what they grew to understand as full-time teachers during their apprentice teaching semester. It seems valuable to reach back to the metaphor discussed earlier in this work, that of the hero's journey, to elaborate on this discomfort momentarily.

Campbell's (1949) discussion of the hero typically includes the crossing from one realm to another. It is this visitation into a strange or special world that initially throws the hero off-balance. Immersed in a new environment complete with different systems or rules, the hero is forced to change; taking on new responsibilities and attempting to harness unfamiliar tools challenge the hero. Similarly, this study's participants experienced disequilibrium as they moved into the unfamiliar world of schools. In addition to leaving the world of the college classroom, where they had experienced great success and a sense of community, each were reared in far different circumstances than the schools in which they were placed for their apprentice teaching. As a result, like the hero, the preservice teachers discovered tests awaiting them in this new world. Their willingness to draw on allies and develop their pedagogical skills varied for each of the preservice teachers; the unique figured worlds and the others positioned in these worlds played a role in their development as well. To better understand each participant, brief biographies follow that will later serve to contrast with the figured world of schools that preservice teachers entered upon advancing in their journeys.

4.4 THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Sandra Martinez

Sandra Martinez (a pseudonym) was a Latina* reared in an upper-middle class household in a town along the Texas and Mexico border. Her parents both had advanced college degrees; her father was a psychiatrist and her mother, a former teacher, worked in the field of social work and counseling. Her grandfather, a lawyer who helped found the LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) chapter in her hometown, instilled public service in his family; her mother's modeling of volunteer work in her local community further cemented the value of service in Sandra. She attended private Catholic schools throughout her K-12 education, until coming to the large university (hereafter, "State University") for her undergraduate degree. Initially, Sandra planned to study psychology, having the influence of her parents as professional models. In the back of her mind, however, was a tug toward education. When asked how she came to teaching as her preferred profession, Sandra responded, "ever since I was really, really little I wanted a gradebook…I would go to teacher stores for supplies for science fair, and get borders and stuff" to make projects look more professional. She "played school" with her cousins, and by high school tutored students living in a local homeless shelter. She described the shelter students as "underprivileged;" many were Spanish speakers struggling in school (S. Martinez, interview, October 27, 2006).

One of the requirements of the "advanced secondary English/language arts methods" course at State University was to create a short imovie that served to illustrate the backgrounds, interests, and experiences of preservice teachers. The advanced

* The use of "Latina" is purposeful here, and reflects Trueba's (1999) contention that "Latinos don't fit any traditional category" but include a whole host of ethnicities, lifestyles, political, and social backgrounds (p. xxxviii). This contrasts greatly with the term "Hispanic," which connotes Spanish descent and more specifically, a colonizing history.

methods professor assigned this project because it met two of her pedagogical goals: to have preservice teachers practice using technology, and to provide them with a possible means for introducing themselves to their students (during apprentice teaching) the following semester. Sandra's imovie underscored the advantages she experienced growing up. Photographs of her family—on a trip to Hawaii, inside an inviting home, celebrating holidays—suggested a cohesiveness and strong bond. Data from interviews, reflections, and the imovie intimate that Sandra's parents created a life of class privilege for their children; she clearly saw class differences and saw herself as a potential role model for some of her students. Sandra explained that she did not want students to get a "false impression of what Hispanics are and what they can do just because of the way they are portrayed in the media or because their parents might be from Mexico and might be working class or whatever" (S. Martinez, interview, November 27, 2006).

Sandra's awareness of difference in class extended to her family's preference for English. Although she grew up in the border town of Laredo, Sandra's first language was English. When asked if she could speak Spanish, she responded, "I can understand Spanish but don't speak it well." Her primary exposure to Spanish occurred when talking to her housekeeper growing up. It was not until she began fieldwork in the teacher preparation program that Sandra encountered Latino students who were different from herself in terms of college aspirations.

> Learning that Hispanics often struggle and are unsuccessful in school was a shock for me because everyone I hung out with in high school went off to great universities to study medicine, law, pharmacy. Needless to say, I was shocked my first semester, when I was placed in an elementary school where some of the students didn't even speak English (S. Martinez, interview October 27, 2006).

Additionally, after discovering very few students of color in Advanced Placement (and pre-AP) courses where she completed fieldwork, Sandra remarked, "It was sad for me to see so few colored faces in AP classes. I don't think it's because those students

weren't capable of being in advanced classes. In fact, I don't really know why there were so few students in them" (S. Martinez, interview, July 6, 2007). Despite this sadness, Sandra was largely satisfied with the public schools where she spent time observing and learning to teach. She perceived greater funding in public schools, and a wealth of opportunities for students, particularly in the area of elective courses and extra-curricular activities. However, Sandra's perceptions might have reflected the schools in which she was placed; other than the early placement in a low performing/low socio-economic elementary school mentioned earlier, she was placed in wealthier (economically speaking) schools for her final two semesters. This may have played a role in producing some naïve notions about the abundance of opportunities for students attending public schools.

Unlike many of her cohort, Sandra preferred middle to high school settings. She acknowledged just "getting through" her high school fieldwork semester, so she could return to the age group she most enjoyed. Sandra's apprentice (student) teaching semester occurred at Thurber Middle School (a pseudonym), one of the less diverse schools in the large urban school district (hereafter, "City School District") where fieldwork was assigned. Sandra's cooperating teacher, Linda Crawford (a pseudonym), had taught in the district for nine years at the time of this study. Over the course of the Sandra's semester, Ms. Crawford expressed a desire to go back to school to complete a Master's degree program. Having graduated from the University teacher preparation program discussed in this study, Ms. Crawford still had contacts with former professors and was allied with their teaching philosophies and methodologies, which made for a smooth transition for Sandra as she moved into her apprentice teaching.

Data collected from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website for the 2005-2006 school year (the most recent available) offered the following demographic

breakdown of Thurber's 740 students: 54.2% White; 34.6% Hispanic; 9.6% were African American; .3% Native A; 1.4% Asian/Pacific Islander. Although the school was housed in an affluent neighborhood, 33% of the student population was described by the district data as "economically disadvantaged," 4.3% "limited English proficient" (LEP), and 37.7% "at risk." According to state and district information, Thurber was ranked "academically acceptable" on the state-wide accountability rating system. Although the vast majority of Thurber students passed the state-mandated exams, there was however a clear gap between White and non-White students. 87-99% (depending on which test) of the White 6-8th grade students at Thurber met the state standards in 2006. The range for African American students meeting the state standard was from 43-94% (the 94%, in 7th grade writing seemed an anomaly; the highest of any other test in this group was 78% in 8th grade social studies). Latino students' test scores ranged from 46-85%, with the highest score occurring in 6th grade reading (Texas Education Agency, 2007).

Matilda Andrews

Matilda Andrews (a pseudonym), a White post-baccalaureate student enrolled in the teacher preparation program, grew up in a small town in East Texas. She characterized her childhood home as existing on "the ghetto side of town," where mainly poor people and people of color lived. Her family life was one of strife; for most of her childhood, her father was out of work and suffered from alcoholism. Her mother, trying to help the family make ends meet, commuted sixty miles one way to work in Houston every day. By the time Matilda was a junior in high school, her father had a break-down and her mother took her daughters out of the house and filed for divorce. Matilda described her mother as hard-working, but overweight and in bad health; she had two small strokes while Matilda was in college, and continued to struggle to eke out a living for herself in Houston after her daughters left home. She rarely communicated with her

father, who she believed was bi-polar and also in poor health (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006). Melissa was reticent to go in great depth about her family and life growing up. The imovie she produced for class drew less on experiences from the past; Matilda chose instead to include photographs of current friends, her boyfriend, and her home with Indie pop music playing in the background. The lack of images of her parents and scenes from her childhood seemed to reinforce Matilda's desire to move forward in her life, unfettered by the past.

Matilda explained that she was a good student in school, but was regularly rebellious. She felt that her teachers did not challenge her enough, and she was able to make A's in classes with little effort. Unlike the other participants in this study, Matilda gravitated toward the sciences. She was initially accepted into a university that specialized in math and science, but found the coursework both too challenging and dull. Hating the town in which the university was situated, she decided to transfer to a smaller liberal arts college in East Texas to complete her undergraduate degree. She graduated from that college in 2004 with a degree in English and journalism and worked for a year in publishing before deciding to go back to school to pursue a teaching certificate. At times, Matilda questioned her decision to go away from the sciences. "My brain works more along those lines, in fact I'm kind of a boy in the left brain/right brain stuff." Although she was a talented writer and enjoyed literature, she questioned how English teachers approach their practice, particularly when it came to interpreting a piece of writing. Matilda worried about how this might impact her work with students. She said, "I understand how important it is for students to derive their own meanings and conclusions from what they're reading…but I want to say, 'no, that's not the right answer' when a student's interpretation is really far off base" (M. Andrews, interview, July 19, 2007).

Matilda initially enrolled in a couple of graduate courses in the curriculum and instruction department, but then recognized she should get certified to teach and practice her craft a couple of years before coming back to school to complete her Master's program if she was to gain anything by the experience. She spent most of her fieldwork in culturally and linguistically diverse schools. For her apprentice teaching semester, Matilda was placed at Smith High School (a pseudonym) and paired with Michelle Holland (a pseudonym). A twenty-five year veteran of the classroom, at the time of data collection Mrs. Holland was recognized as a Board Certified teacher from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

In 2006, Smith High School had a population of 2001 with a demographic breakdown of: 56% Hispanic, 32.2% White, 10.2% African American, 1.2% Asian/Pacifica Islander, and .2% Native American students. Over 50% of the students at Smith qualified for the free/reduced lunch program; 72.2% were labeled "at risk." According to data for 2006 (Texas Education Agency, 2007) Smith High School was rated "Academically Unacceptable" which was a drop from the school's performance from the year before. In 2005, Smith received the accountability rating of "Academically Acceptable" with "Gold Performance" Acknowledgements for improvement in reading/English language arts and mathematics.

Jenny Morgan

Originally a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Jenny Morgan – a White, middle-class preservice teacher – moved with her parents to an affluent suburban area in Central Texas when she was in the tenth grade. From her perspective, Jenny's high school – which "boasted a 'blue ribbon marker' at the front entrance" – was "about half White, Half Latino, with some Asian and African American students sprinkled in" (J. Morgan, interview, June 26, 2007). While the student population was drawn in part from nearby

apartment complexes and a "lower middle class, older neighborhood," Jenny acknowledged that a large portion of students lived in lush Hill Country neighborhoods twenty minutes away. She characterized her high school experience as dichotomous; during the week and at school she hung out with "the country club, church-going folk" at "Dawson's Creek parties and so-called community service meetings," and on the weekends she ran with the "partiers." A straight-A student, Jenny worked diligently to "keep the two lives separate [feeling like] each sphere knew the other existed, but also knew their 'place'" (J. Morgan, interview, June 26, 2007).

During the course of high school, Jenny's parents divorced and she was confronted more personally with the grim reality of socioeconomic status. Her mother moved out of the district to a small nearby town and her father moved to the outskirts of a country club neighborhood. Traveling between these two homes (and the differing worldviews of the two communities) and adjusting to her parents' divorce occupied a good deal of Jenny's time in her latter high school years.

Jenny's impetus to teach was rooted directly in her personal experiences with her younger brother. Because of her grades and enthusiasm for school, Jenny was encouraged to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses, where her teachers were "sympathetic to me and supportive of my path to success." Her brother's school experience was one of "struggling his bumpy way through the school system" (J. Morgan, personal communication, October 9, 2007). Unlike Jenny, he was placed in regular/grade level courses and was in and out of trouble with the school administration. After graduating, the family discovered her younger brother had learning disabilities, AD/HD, and "a pretty severe case of ED [emotional/behavioral disorder]" (J. Morgan, personal communication, October 9, 2007). Jenny found this lack of diagnosis during his

schooling experience and the way that teachers at her school – many of whom did not know the siblings were related – treated her differently from her brother unacceptable.

Of the participants, Jenny's imovie was the most detailed and representative of her life. It was also the most technologically sophisticated, weaving together a montage of film clips from her childhood—Jenny drawing, dancing, opening Christmas presents with her younger brother—with photographs of her grandparents, parents, step-parents, and dog. Interestingly enough, Jenny also chose to include a short film clip from her time in the field, working with students one-on-one and circulating around the classroom, and photographs of her when she worked as a pre-school teacher a couple of years earlier. The use of French subtitles for different segments of her movie that merged into English translations, and photographs of literary and poetry books highlighted her love of language.

Upon entering the university, Jenny's plan was to study psychology and to learn more about how AD/HD affects the cognitive process of learning. After completing an internship in a university psychology lab, Jenny realized "I didn't really want to spend the rest of my life stuck in a lab looking at stats [statistics] instead of people, so I approached it differently—from the aspect of teaching" (J. Morgan, personal communication, October 9, 2007). Her commitment to and passion for teaching reflected this love of working with others; her rapport and connection with students were regularly noted in observations.

Jenny's school placement was at West High School (a pseudonym), a moderately diverse (in terms of culture/ethnicity and economics) "academically acceptable" school in the nearby district. Unlike the other participants in this study, Jenny spent her final two semesters of fieldwork (her internship and apprentice teaching) paired with the same teacher. While Jenny's Cooperating Teacher, Ms. Bacon (a pseudoym), did not typically

volunteer for apprentice teachers, she was so taken with Jenny's enthusiasm, energy, and work ethic that she said early in their first semester together, "I want Jenny to come back next semester. I'm learning so much from her, the kids love her, and she's a natural" (L. Bacon, personal communication, February 24, 2006). Although the university professor who made placements was concerned that this arrangement would provide one less model for Jenny to draw upon later in her work as a teacher, she agreed to keep the two together for Jenny's apprentice teaching semester since it was clear that Ms. Bacon was eager to support an apprentice.

Of West High School's 2,150 students, data from the 2006 school year reported the following demographics: 56.1% were White; 36.3% were Hispanic; 6.2% were African American, 1.1% were Asian/Pacific Islander; .3% Native American. 26.8% of West's students were reported "economically disadvantaged" and 3.8% LEP. Interestingly enough, while the school educated students from some of the wealthiest families in the city (among these, children of politicians, business leaders, and entrepreneurs), there was a significant "at risk" population of 47.3% (Texas Education Agency, 2007).

The preservice teachers highlighted in this study differed somewhat from the students with whom they worked during their apprentice teaching semester; however, each were warmly received by the students and faculty of the schools in which they completed earlier field work. The participants' ability to function and indeed, flourish in the figured worlds of their final semester, hinged on their facility in working with others in their new schools. What follows explicates this journey and details the larger themes: *Negotiating the Figured World of Schools*; *Acknowledging the Tools*; and *Burgeoning Agency*.

4.5 THEME ONE: NEGOTIATING THE FIGURED WORLD OF SCHOOLS

In attempting to address the research questions that govern this study, it is important to consider the contexts in which this study took place. These contexts, referred to in large part as "figured worlds" for the purposes of this work, are "formed and re-formed in relation to the everyday activities and events that ordain happenings within [them]" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 53). They are largely abstract spaces inhabited by people, but interpreted differently by each of their participants. Figured worlds have four characteristics: they are historical worlds in which people are recruited for participation or into which they willingly enter; they are social realms in which positions of the participants matters; they are peopled by familiar social types; and they developed by the figured worlds' activity (p. 41). Data from this study suggests that preservice teachers' ability to understand their role and position as educators harkens back to their own lived experiences as students. As a result, understandings and perceptions about what it means to effectively teach are enmeshed in preservice teachers' own experiences as learners and shaped by their interactions with others in school and beyond. In order for these novices to flourish in new figured worlds, refining their skills as teachers of culturally and economically diverse students, they must understand first how they are positioned. Becoming skilled in adopting the pedagogical approaches they learned in their teacher preparation program required that the participants learn to synthesize experiences gleaned from a host of differing figured worlds.

Researchers (Holland et al., 1998) suggest that as people attempt to make meaning inside social situations they are also learning to "author" their world (p. 170). One's capacity for authoring can be limited by and "depend upon the place, [and] the social position from which the individual engages with others in activities" (p. 176). Thus, as novices' figured worlds collided and intersected with others' figured worlds,

they were in essence nudged by and taught the rules for the new spaces they were entering. Situations that allowed preservice teachers to author their own experiences – and indeed, to blend the theories and ideas learned in the college classroom with their daily experiences in schools – positioned them more powerfully in the sense that they could take more risks.

Preservice Teachers Discovering their Positions

Discovering one's place in a figured world is a complex process where new members "acquire positional dispositions and identities" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 142) based on their interactions with others. Neophytes are guided by more seasoned members of the figured world and their ability to thrive hinges on their willingness and ability to adhere to the rules of the figured world. The preservice teachers studied were shaped both by past experiences as students and by the people and circumstances of the new worlds they were entering. Understanding how they fit into this new system was integral to their developing identities as teachers; how well they negotiated this new world relied in part on how they were welcomed into the world and what pedagogical tools they were permitted to employ.

Acknowledging the Influence of Past Figured Worlds

In conversations that occurred over the course of a year, Jenny, Matilda, and Sandra expressed their hesitations and fears about moving into this new teaching role and the prior experiences that shaped their desire to enter the world of education. Their notions about what makes for an effective educator were equally shaped by past figured worlds. Each expressed a desire to make connections with students; without acknowledging the unique lived experiences of their students, they felt that little progress could be made, educationally speaking. Thus, the participants' sense of the role of

teachers was rooted more deeply in the relationships between teacher and student than in the quality of a teacher's pedagogical practice. In fact, instead of reflecting on the manner in which their teachers taught, or in specific practices that they used in the classroom, there was an emphasis on interpersonal relationships. In a written reflection during her advanced methods course, Sandra explained,

> The great ones not only conveyed information well, but also took a genuine interest in their students' lives. I remember one teacher, Mrs. Rodriguez, who welcomed a few of her closest students to her home. She'd offer great advice about boys…okay, so in retrospect, some of her actions were a bit irresponsible, but the point is she cared about her students enough to see them as actual, interesting human beings (S. Martinez, written reflection, February 20, 2006).

Sandra unwittingly demonstrated the value in holding a high position within a social realm (Holland et al., 1998); even as a student, she was one of the chosen ones, receiving a special invitation to her teacher's home. This was perhaps less important to Sandra at the time than the bond forged between teacher and student and the caring implicit in the invitation.

In contrast, Matilda viewed many of her teachers as "cold and closed." She acknowledged, "During my K-12 experience, teachers were extra-terrestrial creatures most of the time, and I felt like I couldn't relate to them." Like Sandra, Matilda emphasized the importance of the teacher-student relationship, and wrote, "Building connections with students isn't hokey. I think it adds more to the classroom experience on both sides" (M. Andrews, written reflection, February 22, 2006). Feeling in large part like an outsider at her high school, Matilda placed a great importance on building relationships, which will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

Because of the apparent lack of support that Jenny witnessed growing up with an "often-deemed 'lazy,' but actually just bored and conflicted" brother (J. Morgan, personal communication, October 9, 2006), her priorities about effective teaching were rooted in a

desire to advocate for others. In a conversation about how to approach late work with students, Jenny responded,

> I have this haunting voice in my head—a vestige of my personal experiences with my brother, no doubt—that whispers, "But shouldn't content and if they're [the students] learning and growing be all you really care about? Does it matter when that learning occurs?" (J. Morgan, personal communication, February 19, 2006).

Jenny felt conflicted; a straight-A student in both high school and college, she valued learning and worked diligently to ensure her grade point reflected her efforts. She recognized, however, that her work as a teacher obligated her to work on behalf of students – particularly those overlooked in the figured world of schools – like her brother. As detailed in Rubin's (2007) work, Jenny's brother's sense of himself as a learner "developed amid the practices, discourses, categories and interactions" (p. 219) of his school. Labeled as lazy and insufficient he reinforced those notions by repeating those behaviors. Jenny's sense that effective teachers could break that cycle by building relationships and exhibiting flexibility drew directly from a past figured world; observational data suggested that many of her actions in the figured world of West High School reflected this notion.

Reflecting on Race/Ethnicity and Its Impact on Schooling

In addition to their personal feelings about the roles and responsibilities of teachers, the preservice teachers carried differing worldviews – shaped by the "figured worlds and the cultural artifacts that are associated with them" (Holland et al., 1998, pg. 63) – into their apprentice teaching semester. Sandra and Jenny were each forthright in discussions about how race and ethnicity at times served to position (Rubin, 2007) students. Sandra acknowledged the homogenous nature of her private school education,

> Just being in the public school period [is] an adjustment because my experience with school was strictly private, Catholic you know. All my classes were Hispanic students, maybe a few Whites you know, and one African American student…and

> he didn't join us until like maybe the sixth, seventh grade. In Laredo your interactions with other ethnic groups and other races is very limited (S. Martinez, interview, October 27, 2006).

As a member of a private school that served largely wealthy Latino students, Sandra had limited exposure to those different from herself. Not only was Sandra situated in a school where she had few interactions with students of a different race/ethnicity, she had limited exposure in the larger city as well. And, while she lived in a city with a large Latino population, it was still stratified to some degree according to class. Sandra's class privileged Catholic school experiences differed greatly from the figured worlds she was preparing to enter. Although she had concerns about moving into public schools where cultural and economic diversity were more obvious than her own lived experiences Sandra still felt like, "as far as having kids who come from different backgrounds and stuff like that, I think I will still be able to connect with them" (S. Martinez, interview October 27, 2006).

In Jenny's high school,

> It was pretty well known, if not spoken about, that Asian and White kids took the honors classes—which I did, but my brother, who kind of got "tracked" and stuck in remedial or vocational classes, did not—while "regular" classes (which were more like "remedial" if you ask me…they were easy and everyone knew it) were mostly reserved for the lower-income Whites, Latinos, and the general riffraff of the school population (J. Morgan, personal communication, June 26, 2007).

Jenny likewise clearly saw the separation of students by race and to some degree, socioeconomics in her high school classes. In attempting to understand the phenomenon, she drew again on her brother's experiences for citing what she saw as an unjust situation; viewing herself as an agent of change, Jenny sought to combat the recognizable inequality she saw in schools that was the result of the disparate experiences of her brother and herself. She spoke of her high school experiences with a certain amount of

derision but was uncertain how to "fix" the system other than to work within it to make life better for students who might otherwise (like her brother) slip through the cracks.

After questioning Matilda (who was White) if she thought about how her minority students viewed her, rather than discussing her apprentice teaching placement she chose to talk about an experience she and her sister had as teachers in an after-school program in a culturally diverse elementary school in the large local school district the year before. She noted,

> It was really strange because I never thought that the kids didn't trust me because I was White but I felt like… the teachers didn't. The teachers are predominantly African American in Valley (Elementary) and I mean…they…sometimes like I didn't even get acknowledged. Like I was there everyday after school and sometimes they would just walk right past me and like I didn't even exist. And the kids, they loved me and my sister and it was one of those weird things where I felt okay around them and I think they felt okay around me but then I always felt like maybe…I don't know…everything that I felt was from the older people (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006).

Matilda, acknowledging a palpable tension in her after-school program between herself and the experienced, African American teachers still resolved to be the teacher that students would "find approachable and feel comfortable confiding in me from time to time" (M. Andrews, written reflection, February 22, 2006). Based on Matilda's experience in the after school program it seems that she was positioned to some degree by the African American teachers at the school. What is unclear is whether this positioning occurred as a result of Matilda's race or whether it was due to her subordinate role as an after-school care provider, rather than the more esteemed position of teacher.

Figured world theory relies on the notion that we "figure ourselves" as we reside in particular positions; we are also acted upon based on how others view us and from the positions in which we are "persistently cast." Thus, as the preservice teachers considered the conditions of schools, and the requisite positioning (of themselves, of other students)

they were also setting up conditions for future action. Holland, et al (1998) note that as one becomes expert at using the cultural artifacts of a figured world "they may come to re-mediate their positions in them" (p. 137). Mediating tools, the "use of artifacts (i.e., any means or residue of cultural behavior) to regulate human interactions with the world" (Smagorinsky & O'Donnell-Allen, 1998, p. 198), will be discussed further in the chapter. However, it is important to note that one's position is not indefinitely fixed. The degree to which the preservice teachers understood their schools' figured worlds – and their positions within these worlds – offered clues about how much freedom that could expect to alter their original positions within the larger culture.

Coming to Terms with the Realities of Schools

This study's participants acclimated well to life in the classroom. Despite their role as apprentices in their assigned schools, Jenny, Matilda, and Sandra took their dual responsibilities as both learner and novice teacher seriously. Each preservice teacher quickly turned to their (shared) goal of making connections with students; yet in gaining access to the students with whom they worked, they also became privy to the realities of schools and the inequity that existed beneath the surface. As was previously mentioned, the apprentice teachers had exposure to several school campuses during their earlier fieldwork; these limited visits (ranging from ten to forty hours total, for a semester) yielded surface understandings about the schools where they were assigned. Laboring full-time afforded them a richer understanding of the implicit rules of their apprentice teaching schools. Additionally, this first-hand experience pushed the apprentices to consider perhaps for the first time, deficit thinking in action. This was particularly apparent to Sandra and Jenny – who saw a clear stratification of students in terms of who were in honors courses (primarily, White students) and who were in "regular" (grade

level) courses (primarily, students of color) (S. Martinez, interview, October 27, 2006; J. Morgan, interview, November 2, 2006). Along with this growing understanding, these experiences challenged the preservice teachers in terms of flexibility and working with others within the figured worlds of their assigned schools.

Adapting to the School Culture/Understanding the "Rules"

In addition to the figured world of the classroom, preservice teachers also entered into the larger figured world of the school where they completed their practice teaching. Each school had its own ethos that produced and reproduced membership identities, and the positional identities of both students and teachers. Attempting to understand and document the "day-to-day and on-the-ground relations of power, deference, and entitlement, social affiliation and distance" (Holland et al., 1998, pg. 127) is a complex but necessary process for researchers documenting culturally responsive practice. In one sense, this study's participants were positioned two different ways: as apprentices, where their power inside the classroom was limited by their willingness to mesh with their cooperating teacher's curricular and pedagogical goals; and as students, where the preservice teachers were striving to prove themselves to the professor and university facilitators overseeing their apprentice teaching semester. This positioning did not inhibit an honest reflection about the worlds they were experiencing; rather, the participants were forthright in discussing how power played out in their buildings, even if they felt stymied by how to effect any lasting changes in one semester's work.

The school environments discussed here varied in terms of power and privilege in the larger school district; West and Thurber were both viewed as "good schools" by the community, with reputations based largely on student performance on standardized tests, enrollment in Advanced Placement (or Pre-AP) courses, and a low occurrence of violence or insubordinate acts on campus. Delving deeper, though, were instances where

the figured world of the school—and its implied priorities, like conformity, order, and compliance—served to quiet or contain student voices, thus reproducing a hierarchy of power inside the building.

In recent research, Rubin (2007) discusses the use of power by teachers and administrators that both distance students from adults, and also from active learning. Assumptions about ability, culture, and commitment were made about students in their figured world, separating students "from learning by positioning them as poor or non-learners and creating a deprecating environment within which compliance could be seen as a form of self-humiliation" (p. 234-235). A similar – though less obvious – figured world existed at West High School. The school itself was a large, sprawling building, with three floors with wings of classrooms extending out from several central community spaces. Having spent two years observing at West prior to collecting data for this study, there appeared a separation of students on a physical level; those students enrolled in Advanced Placement, Pre-AP, or "enrichment" (like literary magazine, or creative writing) courses were largely housed on the ground level classrooms. This was also a predominantly "White" space, in terms of racial formation. Ms. Bacon, who taught grade-level English was given a room on the third floor, away from the larger cluster of English teachers housed below. According to Jenny, Ms. Bacon joked with students, "I don't know why, we're up here… [maybe] we're relegated to the third floor because I won't agree to teach what they (the rest of the English teaching staff) do" (J. Morgan, interview, November 2, 2006).

As her apprentice semester progressed, Jenny began to sense that her students – who were in large part, students of color – were treated differently from other students in the school. Walking the lower floors of the building, she noticed principals laughing and talking with students; her own students' interactions with authority figures were less

innocuous, which is elaborated in the following examples. First, Jenny noted the ease with which one of her principal's made assumptions about Latino students, particularly in terms of their ability to speak Spanish. She discussed one of her students, Abe, storming into class one day saying, "I don't know Spanish, why has the principal just asked me what this means [pointing to a note, written in Spanish], I don't know Spanish! [It's] just because I'm wearing whatever my chain, I don't know Spanish…" (J. Morgan, interview, November 2, 2006). It is possible the principal was attempting to make a connection with the student; however, Jenny's perception was that Abe felt insulted by the transaction and singled out because of his choice of dress and jewelry. At the very least, this example serves to highlight a certain cultural incongruity between the principal and student as well as a misguided assumption linking clothing style to race or ethnic identity – and additionally, language.

Several discussions of dress code appeared in the data; this is not unusual, given that secondary students are in essence learning to position themselves, which is reflected in their choice of clothing. What was interesting was that each of the stories shared by the preservice teachers involved not White students, but students of color. Jenny discussed this phenomenon in a written reflection. After asking Omari, one of her students, "Where were you today, Bud?" after he missed class earlier in the day, Jenny wrote,

> Smiling, almost as an old, wise man would, a man who has given up on fighting for anything, he replied with a gesture: He pulled up his pants and then said, "ISS. My pants." He giggled apathetically, with a hint of "Can you believe that?" and kept walking. It seemed as if this was the one-hundredth time this had been the case—and it may very well have been, because he misses class for ISS at least once a week. I know there are rules, but GOD, THAT MADE ME SO ANGRY!!! It just doesn't make sense to me. They're basically saying, "Oh, your pants are a little too big…so I think a logical consequence is that you won't be allowed to learn anything today." Great message. The next day, Omari showed

> up wearing the very same kind of pants. They really showed him! (J. Morgan, written reflection, October 9, 2006).

Jenny touched upon one of the problematic paradoxes existing in schools. By removing a student from class for a dress code violation, he would miss information and fall behind. This did little in Jenny's mind to ameliorate the situation, however, since Omari returned to school the following day similarly attired. Noticing several (White) students wearing short skirts that seemed to violate the same code, Jenny ruminated,

> Wonder how long it will take for the Hilton Twins [an "inside" joke that Jenny shared with Ms. Bacon about students in the building who came to school less for learning and more as an opportunity to show off their latest designer wear] to get busted and tossed into ISS? If it even happens at all… (J. Saunders, personal communication, October 11, 2006).

This uneven distribution of dress code violations appeared symptomatic of a larger sorting system within the school, where students who were unwilling to acquiesce to the formal rules would be denied the right to learn. Unsurprisingly, this type of sorting system was not limited to West High School, but appeared at Thurber Middle School as well.

Without prompting about dress code, Sandra discussed a similar situation at Thurber Middle School. She was working with students on a persuasive writing assignment, and in an attempt to help students connect with a topic, she chose "changing the dress code" to use during a class brainstorming activity. This blossomed into a larger conversation when an African American girl in the class,

> raised her hand and said, "Well, Ms. I don't understand why I wear this thing [a spaghetti strapped tank top hidden beneath an over-shirt] and just because I'm black you know teachers would tell me something when there's a Caucasian student next to me wearing you know, the same thing and she doesn't get caught" (S. Martinez, interview, October 27, 2006).

Like Jenny, Sandra was taken aback by her student's experience, particularly since it involved a student who was responsive and engaged in class and whom she considered intelligent and dedicated to learning. While dress code negotiations are not in and of themselves an uncommon experience in public schools, they are significant in this study in that the students singled out for clothing violations in these instances were students of color. The figured worlds of West and Thurber suggested that "people are not so much engaged in self-making, but rather are limited to varying degrees of accepting, rejecting, or negotiating the identities being offered to them" (Urrieta, 2007a, p. 111). The very nature of schooling requires structure and rules, but the uneven distribution of dress code infractions reinforced a lowered status for students who chose identities (reflected in their choice of dress) considered inappropriate by the larger school culture.

During the course of the semester, Sandra and Jenny both began to understand that two parallel, and disparate responses to rules existed inside the figured worlds of their schools, one for students of color and another for White students. Also, the choice of who to target for dress code violations appeared unequally distributed among the larger student population. Additionally, at West High School there appeared an obvious physical distancing of students of color from their more privileged, White classmates – upper floors for students of color, and lower floors for their classmates. Awkward interactions between administrators and students (particularly students of color, as the participants pointed out) seemed to figure in these worlds, often in the hallways between classes. Assumptions made about a student's facility with Spanish served more to isolate the student than lift him up for knowing more than one language; rather than asking if the student knew two languages (and supporting his identity), the student (who in fact was not bilingual) felt marginalized by the experience. Unfortunately, some of these awkward transactions made their way into the classrooms as well, reinforcing stereotypes

and dichotomizing the student population into two separate groups: those on an "honors/AP" track, and those placed (or condemned to, depending on your perspective) in grade level courses.

Confronting and Questioning Deficit Thinking

One of the more problematic matters that arose during the course of this study was evidence of student tracking, which manifested in a two-tiered system, that of the "Advanced Placement" track, and the "Regular," or grade-level track. This was particularly apparent at West High School and Thurber Middle School, where the appearance of students of color was a rare event in the advanced English classes. Luttrell and Parker (2001) write,

> School tracking systems are not abstract divisions made between students with identified skill levels. Rather, these systems of distinction operate as figured worlds and are 'peopled by the figures, characters and types who carry out its tasks' – including teachers who (unwittingly perhaps) interact with students they view as being or not being college-bound or as working with their hands rather than their minds. Just as students know who among them can move between different worlds: for example, between the preps, jocks and skaters, teachers hold perceptions about which students belong and can move between different work and academic worlds (p. 241).

Thus, as Jenny and Sandra acclimated to their figured worlds, they concurrently noticed how their schools were reproducing a filtering system that had huge implications in terms of their students' prospects upon graduation. As a policy, City School District required no application process for entering into Advanced Placement (AP) or pre-AP courses, no grade point average minimum, and no letters of recommendation for entry. In fact, one of the counselors at Smith High School noted, "At Smith we allow students to choose AP. There is no application process or screening, so if the student and parent choose AP, the kid takes AP" (J. Saunders, personal communication, October 25, 2007). Despite this policy, the bulk of students in AP courses were White, while those in grade

level courses were largely Latino and African American students (J. Saunders, observations, September-December 2006). Whether this occurred as a result of students wanting to stay in classes populated by others of their same race or ethnicity, or if it was a response to teacher expectations (or the lack thereof) of their abilities was unclear. What did seem clear was the likelihood that the district's purported commitment to diversity in Advanced Placement courses hinged on the notion of choice; students were free to select the AP track or to choose grade level courses, thus dodging the critique that the district supported tracking.

Regardless, the appearance of an informal tracking system was alive and well in each of this study's schools. Jenny noticed that because West High School had moved from three levels of tracking (AP, Honors, and Regular/Grade Level) to two (AP and Regular/Grade Level), several of what she called "lazy Honors kids" had to drop down to the grade level courses. Their obvious distaste for finding themselves in less prestigious classes manifested in what her Cooperating Teacher labeled "White Kid Entitlement Syndrome;" these largely affluent, White students felt they "had the rule of the room" and could put in little effort with the expectation of an A at the end of the reporting period. In one instance where a White student did minimal work and received a C during a grading period, Jenny observed a parent "storm into the room while class was taking place and demand a parent-teacher conference right then and there" (J. Morgan, personal communication, June 26, 2007). Jenny was alarmed that many of her most diligent students (often, students of color) struggled to make passing grades and that they had no clear advocacy in terms of their parents (J. Morgan, personal communication, April 4, 2007). Evidence of her efforts to assist these students occurred during her lunch and conference periods, when students would come into the room unannounced, asking for

additional help or clarification on assignments (J. Saunders, observation notes, November 2, 2006).

Like West High School, students of color frequently populated the grade level classes at Thurber Middle School. In a member-checking conversation with Sandra, she considered the possibility that the lack of students of color in her pre-AP classes reflected "language barriers that place these students behind." In essence, Sandra wondered if those students who were learning (or had learned) English as a second language were encouraged to take grade level (regular) courses rather than the more rigorous AP courses. She speculated that the overabundance of White students in the pre-AP courses might mirror "a percentage thing; most of the students [at Thurber] were White, so there would be a larger number of White students in AP classes" (S. Martinez, personal communication, July 6, 2007). However, a review of school demographic data suggested that just over half (54%) of Thurber's students were White, yet there were disproportionate numbers of White students in the two advanced classes Sandra shared with her cooperating teacher (between 80-85% according to notes taken during the semester). Conversely, Sandra's grade level classes reflected a 65-70% minority enrollment (J. Saunders, observation notes, October 16, 2006). It is unclear if Sandra was acquainted with the demographic data for her school, although it was readily available.

Sandra did not exhibit a preference for advanced students, although she recalled more positive experiences working with her grade level students. Contrary to what one might think, her understanding – confirmed by one of the other teachers at Thurber – was that often times the grade level students were "more responsive to you as a teacher, because the AP students tended to challenge [their teachers] and get bored easily" (S. Martinez, interview, October 27, 2006). Sandra's sense was that once you got the basic

classroom management and planning obstacles under control, you could work on the relationships with student—which was much more valuable to her as a teacher than trying to keep up with the more vocal and demanding pre-AP students (J. Saunders, observation notes, November 4, 2006). It is possible, too, that the grade level students were more compliant and questioned authority less frequently than the pre-AP students; Sandra's later work as a tutor in an after-school program suggested that her motivation for working with grade level students was rooted more in a sincere desire to help struggling students (J. Saunders, personal communication, July 6, 2007).

Of the three participants in this study, Jenny was most forthcoming and critical about the obvious racial divide in her school's unofficial tracking system and the danger it posed for cementing her students' developing identities,

> I'm starting to see a definite stratification of student "types," either as a consequence or cause of lowered expectations for racial minorities. For example, the class I observed today was a Pre-AP English course. Do you know how many students in the class appeared to be of some origin outside of Anglo Christian or Caucasian? Approximately ZERO. Now, I know this is an issue far more complex than the scope of this short reflection, but it really made me think. My kids are "regulars," and the white students [in those classes] are the minority. What's sad is that the kids internalize this label, make it part of their own identity formation. The other day one of my brightest girls, a Latino student, seemed dejected when I introduced a "fun, new" kind of activity. "Miss," she said dismissively, "You know we're just regulars. This kind of stuff isn't for us. This is honors kids stuff." All the other Hispanic or ESL kids in the class laughed, hauntingly knowingly. This is a particular case that offers a cross-section of both racial and ability-level diversity issues. The trend seems to be that Hispanic and African American kids get placed in "regular" classes, learn the drills and skills while simultaneously being subliminally trained that they are inherently "regular" people, and, consequently, remain in these "average," "on-level," or "regular" stations for the remainder of their high school—if not their lifetime—careers. And I think it's ridiculous. My kids will be on-level, but they will read Shakespeare, and "do poetry," because I am confident that they are capable of doing the same things as the "honors" kids can do (J. Morgan, written reflection, March 2, 2006).

Jenny's concern that students internalized the labels of "regular" or "honors" is reflected in the literature on figured worlds, and suggests that as Luttrell and Parker (2001) discussed (noted earlier) both teachers and students can adopt the identities divvied up by the tracking system and interact with one another accordingly. What troubled Jenny was the possibility that her students might not aspire to move beyond their "regular" label and that the label could serve to reinforce notions of deficit thinking (Valencia, 1997) both in students and in the larger adult population of West. In this instance, the more powerful members of the figured world at West could absolve themselves of blame. Having given students the choice to register for grade level or advanced courses, students – and not the adults – were responsible for creating the very circumstances that could very well limit their success after high school.

Negotiating Relationships with Others

In figured worlds, a person is "involved in an activity or practice [and] is presumed to have a perspective." Additionally, "one looks at the world from the angle of what one is trying to do" (Holland et al., 1998, pg. 44). Matilda, Jenny, and Sandra were each cast as novices, yet their positions as preservice teachers varied and were ordered in part by their relationship with their cooperating teachers. Jenny and her cooperating teacher, Ms. Bacon had the closest personal relationship of this study; because they had worked together for the semester prior to her apprentice teaching, Jenny was familiar with Ms. Bacon's teaching and classroom management style; this did not insulate Jenny from feeling overwhelmed by the task of learning to teach. Concerning planning, she acknowledged, "My mentor teacher (Ms. Bacon) left things wide open for me, but sometimes that was a bad thing, as I had no idea what to do" (J. Morgan, personal communication, June 26, 2007). This wide open approach to planning reflected an equally laissez-faire approach to classroom management. "Miss Bacon's self-professed

classroom management strategy [was] 'I let them have a lot of freedom until they show me they can't be trusted with it'" (J. Morgan, written reflection, February 2, 2006). In attempting to replicate Ms. Bacon's approaches, Jenny found herself at a crossroads; she needed to pick a position, that of teacher or friend. She explained,

> my biggest self-criticism every single night, driving home from school, was that I was being too much of a friend and not enough of a guiding, authority-type figure in their "lives" (in the classroom, really). This did help me connect VERY well and VERY quickly with them, but sometimes I admit I would go home feeling selfish because I had wasted their valuable learning time, their need for structure and discipline, by feeding my own weakness—a basic human need to "be liked" (J. Saunders, personal correspondence, June 26, 2007).

It is possible that Ms. Bacon's position in the larger English Department and visibility as a colleague was diminished in some respects because of the separation of her room from the larger department downstairs. Jenny and Ms. Bacon were not given common planning time with the rest of the department, and they found themselves at times a repository for students who were not thriving in their English classrooms downstairs. Even into the second six weeks of the school year, the Special Education Coordinator and a counselor were dropping by to see if Ms. Bacon and Jenny were willing to take in a few more students "because you're the only one(s) I can think of who will take them" (J. Morgan, interview, November 2, 2006). The added responsibility of addressing the learning needs of a disproportionate number of special education students worried Jenny less than the reinforcement of separation between the "chosen" students who were rewarded with smaller class sizes and placed in advanced courses. What concerned her more, though, was how to emulate and learn from Ms. Bacon's easy connection with her students so that she could become a more effective teacher while still maintaining a leadership position in the classroom. Given that Jenny's openness and compassion were ever-present, the relationships with students came easily; synthesizing

the notions learned in her teacher preparation courses with the realities of schools posed a more difficult dilemma.

Conversely, Matilda's relationship with her cooperating teacher was much more formal. Characterizing Mrs. Holland as motherly, Matilda noticed that their shared students tended "to go for her… they go past me sometimes when it's talking about grades and things which I guess kind of upset me at first" (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006). This deference to Mrs. Holland was noted in classroom observations; Matilda often looked to her cooperating teacher to clarify a point, or Mrs. Holland would jump into the conversation when Matilda was leading the class discussion (J. Saunders, observation notes, November 8, 2006). These transactions were not corrective in tone; rather, it appeared Mrs. Holland was hoping to extend a point or push students to connect their learning to previous class discussions. However, Matilda struggled in her efforts to position herself as a teacher in the class; having been thus positioned she appeared less comfortable taking risks in her pedagogical practice when she was given carte blanche to plan particular lessons.

Additionally, while Matilda contended in an interview she preferred small group discussions and student-centered activities, her actions in the classroom did not typically reflect these preferences. She was regularly placed front and center, in a teacher-directed mode; there were few opportunities for students to construct their own knowledge; in fact, notes kept during the data collection process documented how Matilda's students relied on her as a giver of knowledge rather than a facilitator of learning. In one class, Matilda asked students to "work on their own" on a vocabulary activity after she had modeled a guided practice, and one of the students responded, "No, please stay up in front—let's go word by word." When several other students chimed in with, "yes, please" Matilda continued to go through the assignment with them, word by word as the

students requested (J. Saunders, observation notes, October 6, 2006). This encouraged dependence with students seemed to mirror Matilda's corresponding dependence on Mrs. Holland inside the classroom; in many ways, it appeared a part of the classroom ethos. As a result, Matilda seemed less enthusiastic about attempting activities that placed students in charge of their own learning, which for the initial part of the study limited her ability to draw on their experiences or prior learning.

Unlike Jenny, who meshed well in her apprentice teaching environment and could make attempts at more innovative pedagogical practices, Matilda largely relied on the teacher-directed model. In this sense, Jenny and Matilda's relationships with their cooperating teachers corresponded closely with their eagerness (or lack thereof) to attempt to enact the kind of teaching practices they had garnered in their preparation program. Viewing herself as positioned equally with her mentor, Jenny took risks; sensing that she was still viewed as a learner, Matilda seemed more concerned with pleasing Mrs. Holland than with stretching her pedagogical repertoire.

Intersecting with Additional Figured Worlds

As stated earlier, figured worlds are largely abstractions; we enter into and exist in different figured worlds simultaneously. The preservice teachers central to this work drew on lessons learned in prior figured worlds – like their teacher preparation program – while taking positions (and being positioned) in the new worlds of their assigned schools. As a result, they were continuously negotiating the rules and attempting to make meaning out of each of these worlds as they moved from the position of student to that of educator. It was during these moments of intersection between – and among – different figured worlds that preservice teachers discovered challenges. In their role as students, they were taught that certain methods, ideas, or strategies would work in the classroom; in their role as apprentice teachers, this was not always the case.

The sections that follow detail what occurred when preservice teachers attempted to employ some of the instructional approaches they learned in the college classroom in the public schools. Also salient were moments when preservice teachers did not consider the larger implications of the collision of figured worlds – particularly the contrasting perspectives that existed in their classroom. Finally, this section describes the discomfort preservice teachers felt in being governed by a district-mandated planning guide while learning to teach.

Adopting Instructional Approaches: Preservice Teachers' Consideration of Group Work in the Practical Realm of Schools

Among the more interesting moments documented by this study were those when preservice teachers attempted to merge what they learned in the university classroom to the animated context of public schools. This crossroads, or intersection of two figured worlds creates what researchers (Fecho et al., 2005) call "the wobble," or a space for uncertainty to emerge. How does a preservice teacher transition from one figured world to another, without losing her equilibrium? The literature suggests that "coming to an appreciation of this unsettling state of vertigo creates opportunities for examining practice in ways that might not otherwise occur" (Fecho et al., 2005, pg. 175). Data from this study suggests that although the preservice teachers were in large part complimentary of their teacher preparation program, they were equally critical. Jenny, who felt that "as a consequence of being immersed in the university's 'uber-sensitive' culture for a good five years" she had arrived at her apprentice teaching with a mindset that embraced culturally responsive practice, was puzzled by a school culture that did not necessarily support this notion in any noticeable way. While Ms. Bacon praised Jenny for her teaching ability and commitment to serving their shared students, the collective culture of the larger school was less supportive. She writes,

> when you learn those "cool activities" at [the university], there is a huge disconnect between the world of imagining how wonderful they will be, how much every other teacher in the building will either champion your cause for its effectiveness or at least applaud your fresh outlook, and how the real world actually sees these "new cool ideas" (J. Morgan, personal communication, June 26, 2007).

Although the lead professor for secondary English methods held a high regard for group work and regularly modeled this in the college classroom (J. Saunders, observation, September 12, 2006), Matilda and Sandra questioned notions about grouping and group work (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Slavin, 1980) during their apprentice teaching semester. Reflecting back on one of her psychology of learning courses, Matilda remembered thinking, "Is this lady serious? She can't mean this" after her professor proffered research that suggested teens picked their peer groups based on things like style of dress, "and not based on race" (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006). Her questions were reinforced when Matilda discovered her classes were often "divided by color" – and at times, gender – in terms of where students chose to sit and with whom they opted to work during grouping activities. Matilda acknowledged that perhaps it was the "textbook's view" that the professor was discussing, but walking the halls, eating in the cafeteria, and working at Smith High School offered evidence that there was a gap between what she was taught and the reality she was experiencing. Believing that students gain more from differing perspectives, Matilda grappled with how to redistribute the largely homogenous groups she found in her school and classroom (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006).

Sandra struggled with this same situation. As discussed earlier, there was an uneven distribution of students of color in her grade level classes and an over-abundance of White students in her pre-AP classes, yet diversity still existed. When given the opportunity to self-select their groups, however, students still clustered together

according to race; this aggravated both Sandra and her cooperating teacher, who brought it to one class' attention. Despite this conversation, students continued to group themselves with others who looked like them, unless they were assigned by their teachers to cross racial boundaries.

In one instance, Matilda discovered that just because a teacher selects which students work together is no guarantee that students will work cooperatively. After distributing chapters from Dante's The Inferno to small (teacher-selected) groups, Matilda and Mrs. Holland witnessed a "divide and conquer" approach to the assignment. Students were supposed to prepare a group presentation for the class that discussed the following: the allusions that occurred in their chapter, the particular part of hell it addressed, which sinners were housed in this section, and their appropriate punishment. Rather than working collectively, the groups typically divided up the information to attack the assignment. Observation notes suggested an almost deathly quiet classroom while students were completing this assignment; although students were reading, taking notes, and sitting together, there was very little interaction. There seemed an air of "you can put us together, but you cannot make us talk to [and thus, learn from] each other" in the classroom. This unwillingness to work collectively, and in a sense, creatively produced somewhat dry and scripted presentations at the end of the project (J. Saunders, observation notes, November 8, 2006).

Data collected from State University professors' syllabi, interviews, and sample assignments from two of the participants (Sandra and Jenny) suggested that pedagogically speaking, there existed a collective support for socioconstructivism. Data from one syllabus included the following goal for constructivist instructional design: "Your continued development as effective classroom teachers through the use of instructional approaches that acknowledge special social-cultural contexts and students'

unique understandings, along with student-centered instruction" (M. Masters, unpublished document, 2006). University students were given ample opportunities to act as learners in their courses; professors would assign, and at times, allow students to choose who they would work with on collective (group) assignments (P. Smith and P. Keller, interview, November 15, 2006). Opportunities also existed for students to debrief the experiences and assess the pros and cons of group work in terms of student learning.

This in no way implies that preservice teachers collectively supported the notion of grouping. In one instance, while observing preservice teachers preparing to engage in a brief grouping activity the professor leading the class acknowledged "I bet many of you hated being in groups in school." Looking around the room, many of the preservice teachers were nodding their heads or saying, "yes…" as they moved into groups. Unfortunately, the professor chose not to extend the conversation about why the preservice teachers felt discomfort with group work, or how to tackle the same response from future students. And, while there was a short discussion about assigning roles for students (like scribe, materials gatherer, clarifier) when employing groups, there was little talk around why this was important. When one preservice teacher asked, "What role would you assign struggling or ESL students in grouping?" the question was never really answered (J. Saunders, personal journal, September 12, 2006).

Missing Opportunities for Deeper Understanding

Despite a wealth of opportunities for preservice teachers to question the figured worlds that they had entered, there were several missed opportunities to consider inequity and the larger cultures fomenting beneath the surface of their assigned schools. Nieto (2000) acknowledges that "a concern for social justice means looking critically at why and how our schools are unjust for some students," and taking stock of what policies and teaching practices "devalue the identities of some students while overvaluing others" (p.

183). Sandra had such opportunities where she might have dug deeper with her students to critically engage in conversations about injustice, inequity, and privilege. As discussed earlier, when one of her African American students critiqued another teacher for singling out students of color for dress code infractions, Sandra was stumped about where to take the conversation. She was "sort of shocked… I just didn't know what to say to her." Sandra replied, "Wow that's really sad. I'm sure that the teacher doesn't mean to do that… if you want to talk to me about that after class we can" (S. Martinez, interview, October 27, 2006). Sandra then drew the conversation back to the persuasive essays her students were preparing to write. When I asked if her student had come to her to discuss the dress code situation further, Sandra acknowledged, "No, but I'm still hoping…" (J. Saunders, personal correspondence, November 7, 2006).

A second observed opportunity to open up a conversation – if not about privilege, at least about how varied the students' prior experiences were – was kept at a surface level. Students were brainstorming in order to create a "significant positives and negatives graph" for class. Sandra had learned about this activity, which is drawn from Rief's (1992) book about approaching diversity in the English classroom, in her advanced methods course. The positives and negatives graph offers students a way to plot experiences from their lives, rank them by year and the students' perception of the experience (both positive and negative), and insert a visual cue (a quick drawing or symbol) that represents some of the pivotal events in their lives. Additionally, this assignment provides valuable information for teachers about their students – information that can be drawn on in future conversations about writing and literature. Having experienced this lesson in the college classroom, Sandra modeled her professor's practice; she had students quickly brainstorm thirteen really great memories they had, and eleven more difficult experiences. The choice of odd numbers was to pique the students'

curiosity, and quiet murmurs of "why aren't we just choosing ten? Or twenty?" could be heard in the room while students did their work. Sandra then had students choose their three best and worst experiences to share with their tablemates.

In a large group conversation, students reported out significant events from their lives. Interestingly enough, the events seemed to reflect the figured worlds from which her students had sprung, and represented their cultural and economic diversity at the same time. While some of the less affluent students described their best moments as "learning to play basketball" or an experience with family, the more affluent students discussed trips abroad (to Amsterdam, Germany, and Sweden), living in a foreign country for several months, and visiting Disneyland. Negative experiences were vastly different too. One student reported having a knife pulled on him, while another felt frustrated when he accidentally ran over an old woman while learning to snow ski (J. Saunders, observation notes, November 13, 2006). The clearly disparate events offered clues for Sandra about the largely different figured worlds of her students; however, she did not linger on any one experience while the conversation was occurring, or attempt to tie these significant events to literature or discussions that happened later in the semester. While it might be difficult, if not inappropriate, to discuss class and socioeconomics with 8th grade students, it still seemed a missed opportunity to draw on students' knowledge garnered from life experiences and to connect this knowledge to the larger world and the world of literature.

Matilda too missed an opportunity to explore culture more deeply with a class when she encountered a student from India in her fieldwork experience. Her student, Migmar, who looked "Americanized because of the way he dressed" (M. Andrews, written reflection, April 1, 2006) had a host of different interests from his fellow students. In the computer lab one day, Matilda discovered Migmar viewing web sites about cricket

and ancient temples in India (both of which were not related to the class assignment). A different day, Migmar allowed another student to look at the prayer beads he regularly wore around his wrist. When the student casually tossed the beads back at Migmar, he was met with, "You just can't throw them on my desk, now someone's probably dead because of that." Matilda also reported hearing Migmar ask out loud why he had to pledge allegiance to the United States flag, noting, “I think he wants to share himself and his home culture with other people, but hasn't gotten the chance in this particular class. I believe he feels like he is still on the outside of our culture” (M. Andrews, written reflection, April 1, 2006).

In part because of her cooperating teacher’s reluctance to step away from the district’s curricular guide, there was never an opportunity for Migmar and the rest of Matilda’s students to explore their culture and gain insight about others’ varying life experiences (J. Saunders, personal correspondence, September 20, 2006). The interruption of such conversations by the district curriculum will be discussed later in this chapter; this example serves more as evidence that despite Matilda’s interest in and sympathy toward this marginalized student, she was unable to move “off topic” long enough for students to explore themselves, their ideas, and their differing worldviews. This absence of space for such conversations reproduced a pecking order in the figured world of the classroom, where the curriculum and teacher supplanted the interests and experiences of the students, and students were positioned as less valuable than content coverage.

Intersecting with the Constraints of the Curriculum

The district in which Jenny, Matilda, and Sandra completed their apprentice teaching relied heavily on instructional planning guides (hereafter, IPGs) developed at the central district office (City Independent School District, 2007). The IPGs reflected the

larger, state-mandated curriculum and were by all accounts created to help teachers in their planning, an unintended consequence some preservice teachers reported was feeling hindered by the construct. While preservice teachers were exposed to multicultural literature in both English methods and literature courses at the university, they were limited in terms of what they could teach once they moved into their cooperating teachers' classrooms. These restrictions were even more evident once they began planning with their cooperating teachers, who were equally inhibited by the figured world of the larger English department and its corresponding goals for what was taught, and at what level.

Although Jenny was somewhat troubled by the largely canonical (read: White/male) literature she was expected to teach, even more distressing was her lowered status at West High School. This was not just a reflection of her status as an apprentice teacher, but more closely connected to her placement with a cooperating teacher who did not share conference periods or lunch with the larger English department in the school. Additionally, because Jenny and Ms. Bacon worked a largely culturally diverse student population – similar to those in Rubin's (2007) study, who were in many ways positioned as lower status inside the larger school culture – their own ability to advocate for their students was at times, a challenge.

Since there were insufficient sets of novels for each of the junior English teachers to teach any particular text, teachers at West would reserve class sets and then pass them along to another teacher at the end of a teaching unit. Ms. Bacon had reserved several class sets of *The Crucible* for an entire (six week) grading period, so that her classes could have a copy to read at home in addition to the class set they used daily. Jenny was surprised then, when several teachers came into their room unexpectedly to collect the

books two weeks early. Rather than confront the teachers directly, however, Ms. Bacon went ahead and gave the teachers as many books as she could spare.

For the remainder of the unit, students shared what few books remained – those not seized by the teachers and those that Jenny and Ms. Bacon bought at used bookstores to supplement their cache. When I asked Jenny what she thought that this experience said about who held the power in the department, she acknowledged that the English teachers downstairs were additionally privileged in what training opportunities and workshops they were encouraged to attend. She said, "I know downstairs in the English wing they team a lot, and [go to] workshops and all that stuff, but we're way up here… I don't even go to the lounge, you know…" The separation by means of space – and of different figured worlds within one department – and the different power positions created by this separation reinforced Jenny's understanding that the first floor teachers prided themselves on "doing things right down here [downstairs]" while the outlying teachers merely went through the motions of teaching (J. Morgan, interview, November 2, 2006). Despite the obvious disregard for Ms. Bacon (and Jenny) evidenced in this example, counselors and an assistant principal made appearances in their room throughout the semester to ask Ms. Bacon if she would be willing to take in more students, particularly those with extensive ARD paperwork or who had experienced a conflict with one of the downstairs teachers (J. Saunders, observation notes, November 15, 2006).

Sandra found herself limited less by the IPGs than by her cooperating teacher's preference for teaching literary passages from an annotated workbook that accompanied their state-adopted textbook. While Ms. Crawford required students to check out books from the school library and held them accountable for a certain number of pages per six week grading period by having students complete an oral summary, the class did not

employ book clubs or study novels as a class. When talking with Sandra about this absence – and the missed opportunity for students to enter literary worlds that offered differing lived experiences and multiple (racial, economic, gender, etc.) perspectives – she admitted,

> I think that I would probably…maybe once, twice a year, three times a year do a class novel. I'm not sure which ones yet, but after I kind of figure that out I would like to incorporate an important work, like *Night* if I was doing 8th grade (S. Martinez, interview, October 27, 2006).

Sandra also saw the value of tying literature to writing and equated this to a system Ms. Crawford already had in place. "In her [Ms. Crawford's] writing workshop, she allows students to do several 'free' pieces, but every six weeks she has one required piece" (S. Martinez, interview, October 27, 2006). Sandra thought the same could be done with literature; students could self-select titles, but then come together for a closer reading of a class text. These ideas were limited to the future, however, since Ms. Crawford largely managed curricular decisions during the semester. At this point, Sandra's main source of creativity in terms of the curriculum came in how a lesson was presented, rather than in what piece of literature or features of writing were taught.

Because Matilda was working primarily with AP and pre-AP students, there was an additional layer of responsibility in terms of the curriculum. In addition to the IPGs, which varied among grade level and AP courses, Matilda was also responsible for helping prepare students for their Advanced Placement exams. She explained,

> I've had…kids come up and say "Look, like this is just too much for me," and I do think we feel like we kind of overloaded them and philosophically I don't want to feel like…I don't want students to feel like they're overloaded now, but it seems like there is a lot of stuff that we had to get done and [snaps fingers] we had it this quick (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006).

When Matilda discovered she was going to be placed in one of the more culturally diverse campuses for her apprentice teaching, she initially thought, "Maybe we'll get to

teach writers of color." She was later frustrated by a curriculum that figured largely "dead White guys" (J. Saunders, personal communication, August 15, 2006). Adhering to the district IPGs, Mrs. Holland showed Matilda a syllabus for what they would "cover" for the fall semester. Among the selections for the sophomore pre-AP classes that Matilda eventually took over were Sophocles' *Antigone*, Dante's *The Inferno*, and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Researchers (Banks, 2004a; Nieto, 1995; Sleeter, 1996a) acknowledge that it is not enough to simply alter the curriculum by including the stories, histories, and ideas of marginalized people to leverage change in education; we must additionally recognize and attempt to alter the institutional forces that keep people – particularly people of color and those who face economic hardships – marginalized.

The experiences of the preservice teachers studied suggested that the school district in which they worked lacked a level of thoughtfulness in their development of the IPGs, both in terms of the literary selections they asked teachers to teach and in its overall structure. Feeling pressured to stay on a tight schedule, many of those moments that could have developed into critical conversations about race, ethnicity, poverty, and justice were stymied by both the curriculum and the figured worlds of the schools.

4.6 THEME TWO: ACKNOWLEDGING THE TOOLS

This qualitative case study acknowledges that schools are complex worlds, where preservice teachers must negotiate what they have learned in the university setting with their daily interactions with students in classrooms during their apprentice teaching semester. Early on, the study participants positioned themselves (and at times, found themselves positioned) in their new environments. Initially, they struggled to balance the responsibilities of the classroom (Fuller, 1969), like building relationships with students, planning, managing time and the classroom, and navigating the figured worlds existing inside their schools. What follows in *Acknowledging the Tools* is a discussion of how

Jenny, Sandra, and Matilda fortified their curricular and pedagogical practice by mediating the tools (Vygotsky, 1986) available to them. Some of these tools came from their experiences as learners in the college classroom; others developed as they wrestled with how to appropriately support literacy practices (Street, 2003) with their students.

One of the questions central to this study was "how are preservice teachers' understandings about multicultural education evidenced in their practice?" In attempting to address this question, the following section describes first how the preservice teachers understood and defined multiculturalism. I then turn to how Sandra, Jenny, and Matilda's practice reflected the socioconstructivist principles they were exposed to in their teacher preparation program. Finally, this section turns to limitations experienced by the preservice teachers in the teaching of literature, and their budding awareness about how the figured world of policy (both national and district) can impede their practice in the figured world of the classroom.

Understanding Multiculturalism

Along with the rest of their teaching cohort, Jenny, Matilda, and Sandra were required to take a multicultural education course as a part of their teacher certification program. Artifacts from the class included both reflective essays – which examined preservice teachers' own life histories – and lesson plans created using popular authors like Maya Angelou, Sandra Cisneros, and Harper Lee. While these documents offered preservice teachers the opportunity to blend some of the pedagogical strategies they were learning in their courses with multicultural literature, they seemed to reflect the "additive approach" to curricular reform that Banks (2004a) details in his research. An additive approach maintains that new voices, content, and themes are added in to enrich a traditional curriculum, but lack a substantive focus on why or how these literary selections are useful in transforming the educational opportunities for secondary students.

Although there was evidence that race, class, and ethnicity were expected components of the lesson plans they generated, in talking with Sandra (S. Martinez, personal communication, July 5, 2007) there seemed to be few in-depth classroom conversations in the multicultural course about why these components were required. Additionally, while Jenny parroted one of her professor's admission that sometimes teachers "have to 'have those conversations' with students about respect, various issues of race, religion, ethnicity, ability level instead of acting like those divisions don't exist" she seemed ill-equipped to describe just how this might occur in a classroom setting (J. Morgan, written reflection, March 2, 2006).

Morrell (2005) asks,

> what kinds of teachers do we want working with the most marginalized populations? What should count as essential content knowledge for tomorrow's English teachers? How seriously do we take our beliefs about the role of literacy education in promoting individual and social transformations? (p. 319).

He recommends that preservice teachers have opportunities to investigate cultural studies, critical pedagogy, and new media literacies in tandem with their teacher preparation coursework, but cautions that taking classes is not enough.

> They also need spaces to talk about how to incorporate new and popular literacies into conservative environments and schools… teachers need safe spaces to talk about this work in the language of standards (p. 318).

Course documents and interview data suggest that while Jenny, Sandra, and Matilda were exposed to the tenets of multiculturalism and its manifestation in English classrooms and even provided, to some degree, a space to talk about cultural diversity, they still grappled with how to bridge these with the figured world of the classroom.

This grappling is elaborated in the following section, which details the difficulty participants had in defining or even describing multicultural education. A discussion of how preservice teachers conflated multiculturalism, multiple intelligences, and

stereotyping is included as well. As in the hero's journey, the participants experienced these challenges as opportunities for growth in their development as educators. We will discover in a later section, however, that some of this valuable learning was not fully understood until Jenny, Matilda, and Sandra had completed their apprentice teaching and could reflect back upon the experience.

Defining Multiculturalism

One of the more interesting pieces of data to emerge from this study was that although the preservice teachers had taken a multicultural education class as a part of their coursework, they were unable to articulate what multiculturalism meant. This posed a significant challenge during the data-collection process, particularly since one of the over-arching questions of this study was, "How are the understandings about multicultural education evidenced in the preservice teachers' practice?" Sandra defined multiculturalism in more abstract terms:

> From what I understand from our class [multiculturalism means] just incorporating all types of cultures into the classroom as far as like, uhm, reading – you know – incorporate African American, Asian American, Native American, all the different types of you know ethnic groups, trying to reach every student just so that they don't get this one perspective of like the white male…of women also (S. Martinez interview, October 27, 2006).

This definition seems to imply the use of multicultural literature as the key component of multiculturalism, rather than a larger commitment to equity that draws on pedagogical practices that support culturally diverse learners. While including a wide array of authors and allowing students to view multiple perspectives is invaluable in the English classroom, pedagogical considerations were not readily apparent in Sandra's definition. When pushed to tie this thinking to her practice, Sandra discussed how she and Ms. Crawford used etymology and derivatives (in this case, Latin and Spanish) to explain a vocabulary word to some of the Spanish speakers in her class.

Rather than turning the subject to a classroom application, Jenny too spoke in more general terms.

> On the issue of ethnicity, race, religion, and other aspects of an individual's origin, I do not think one can be sensitive ENOUGH. I've learned you can never let it slip your mind that you're talking to a group of students who may be from as many different ethnic, racial, or religious backgrounds as there are individuals in the room. You can't let anything "slide," especially matters of mutual respect, such as racial slurs or jokes...Even if you honestly didn't even think about how one might have been offensive, even if you think it was "all in good fun" (J. Morgan, written reflection, March 2, 2006).

This thinking is embodied in her description of a hallway interaction Jenny witnessed between two teachers, where she critiqued one of the teachers for making "a wise crack about a student's slow comment [in class] being excusable, on the basis of the color of her hair (blonde)" (J. Morgan, written reflection, March 2, 2006). What Jenny found most ironic about this conversation was that the teacher was herself blonde, thus reinforcing a stereotype that Jenny (who was also blonde) found personally offensive. Like Sandra, Jenny's description made no explicit links between multiculturalism and the teaching of English. Certainly, they each appeared committed to advancing their students' learning – irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, or in Jenny's case, hair color. However, their clear lack of specificity was reminiscent of the theoretical framework created by Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999) discussing how preservice teachers "adopt the pedagogical tools available for use in particular social environments" (pg. 15). This framework delineates "five degrees of appropriation" that range from a lack of appropriation to achieving mastery (pg. 15-19) and describes how preservice teachers move through the zone of proximal development, gaining efficacy as they internalize the use of tools.

In this instance, Sandra and Jenny's responses reflected an appropriation of the "surface features" of a tool, with the tool in question a workable understanding of

multiculturalism. In their description of this degree of appropriation, the researchers note "the learner is making some effort to grasp the official conception, yet is succeeding in doing so only at the surface level" (p. 17). Exhibiting this surface level of understanding, Sandra and Jenny moved on to examples from the figured worlds of their schools. Sandra moved the conversation to a discussion of vocabulary and Jenny to critiquing another teacher's off-hand comment.

Conflating Multiculturalism with Multiple Intelligences and Stereotyping

Several of the courses preservice teachers were required to take included were supportive of and indeed extended the notions of multiculturalism. In fact, syllabi obtained from two of the courses (advanced methods and multicultural education) set understanding and supporting multiculturalism as a primary goal or objective of the classes (Masters, 2006; Smith, 2006). Interestingly enough, when I asked two of the professors how they defined multiculturalism – particularly in terms of pedagogical practice – the conversation digressed instead into a discussion about how the multicultural education course was being dropped as a requirement at State University. This decision was made in part because secondary English preservice teachers were already required

> to take an African American literature course…a southwestern Hispanic lit or the equivalent, and a third culturally specific area. Our English majors also have to have an English Language in social context course, and literary studies for high school teachers. There are so many things we expect them to do that there was little wiggle room left in the English major for senior seminars, electives or anything else (P. Smith and P. Keller interview, November 15, 2006).

The emphasis on African American, Latino, and other culturally specific literature was laudable in that it exposed preservice teachers to a diversity of perspectives. What made this decision problematic was that preservice teachers would lose the opportunity to tie the study of literature to pedagogy, one of the purposes of the multicultural education

course. With that said, this study's participants had taken the multicultural course (and also, two methods courses), yet in observations still evidenced naïve notions about multiculturalism. And, while the syllabus for their apprentice teaching seminar course called for "a dedicated effort to integrate culturally and linguistically relevant curricula, in tandem with effective instructional strategies into [their] classrooms," (M. Masters, course syllabus, Fall 2006) there was little linking of this commitment to conceptions and understandings of what it meant to be a multicultural educator in conversations with the participants.

Attempts to attend to bridge the multicultural education and culturally responsive practice gap actually culminated in three tools – if you will – that the preservice teachers discovered in their teacher preparation courses. I chose to include the following three examples because they occurred repeated times in the data and were (each) articulated by at least two of the participants: Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, units on stereotyping, and oddly enough a "what color is your personality" (Ritberger, 2000) module that made its way through the professional development school community (for in-service teachers) a decade earlier.

After interviewing the participants and sitting in on several of their classes, it became apparent that multiple intelligences were discussed throughout their teacher preparation process. This might have something to do with the licensure exam, which required that preservice teachers understood multiple intelligences in order to pass the test (State Board for Educator Certification/Texas Education Agency, 2008). Jenny acknowledged,

> By now, Howard Gardner is old news, but it still surprises me how little I see in the classroom that reflects teachers' attempts to put the theory into practice. I struggle with coming up with and implementing varied types of materials, too, and yes, it's a lot of extra work when you try to incorporate all types of media, but in the end, isn't it worth it? This is something I'm consciously trying to change

> about my own teaching/planning style (J. Morgan, written reflection, March 2, 2006).

Similarly committed, Sandra noted,

> I will try my hardest to integrate a variety of activities that encourage students to use their different talents. It may slow down the process a bit, but I will also try my hardest to teach lessons in a variety of ways that reach my visual, audio and multi-style learners (S. Martinez, written reflection, March 12, 2006).

Based on observations of their teaching, each of these preservice teachers succeeded to some degree in realizing this goal. However, it is important to address the efficacy of Gardner's multiple intelligences as a panacea for inequity in schools and for addressing cultural diversity. While the study of multiple intelligences does raise awareness of a diversity of learning styles, it does little to deconstruct how sociocultural factors like race or socioeconomic status might inhibit learning. Additionally, as Eisner (2004) writes, there is an "irony of a conception of multiple intelligences that acknowledges, and indeed embraces, the cultivation of diversity in schools while schools are driven by policies that provide increasingly little space to pursue the vision that multiple intelligences adumbrates" (p. 34). Thus, in the sense that schools are judged by means of scores on state-mandated tests, an emphasis on multiple intelligences might lessen the success of students, particularly those who do not have the linguistic or mathematical "intelligences" valued by such assessments. As such, the preservice teachers again exhibited a surface understanding of a concept but "seemed less clear about what students could gain from the experience" (Grossman et al., 1999, p. 17) or how to synthesize multiple intelligences theory with culturally appropriate practice.

Rather than elaborating on the multiple intelligences theory, Matilda was struck by a stereotyping unit that she was exposed to during her multicultural education course. She wrote,

> I'm an idealist at heart, so I want everyone to get along, but in my mind I know that it won't always be the case. I think it's important to create an accepting classroom environment from the get-go, and Professor Smith (a pseudonym) has a great unit plan for setting up that environment that I plan to use. It is a unit that goes over stereotyping and learning to accept one another and let go of our stereotypes of one another. It also creates a social contract for the classroom that all students need to abide by and it sets up the ground rules for all conversations we may have. (M. Andrews, written reflection, March 08, 2006).

The unit, entitled, "The Language of Distortion" consisted of five writing modules that culminate in large class discussions. Among them, students examine stereotypes about their high school and the reality of life inside the school; they then move on to look at larger (global) stereotypes, like athletes, cheerleaders, nerds, skaters and consider what it is like to be stereotyped. Students reflect on their own experiences being stereotyped by others and finally sign an agreement to not use stereotypes in the classroom (P. Smith, unpublished document, 2006). Interestingly enough, the "Language of Distortion" materials made no explicit mention of how stereotypes about race, ethnicity, class, or sexual orientation are often reproduced in the classroom setting. Having missed out on an opportunity to problematize stereotypes in the safety of their multicultural education course, the preservice teachers additionally lacked practice in approaching similar conversations with their students.

In the end, while Matilda found enough value in this unit to bring it to my attention, stereotyping was not the focus of any of her lessons during her apprentice teaching semester. A discussion of gender roles with her students (which is discussed later in this chapter) contained the closest link the stereotyping unit; however, having had little practice in discussing gender inequity in her own coursework, this discussion was again kept on a surface level.

Sandra too valued the stereotyping unit, and of the three participants was the most willing to share work she had produced for many of her teacher preparation courses,

including personal essays and reflections with me. Among these artifacts was a unit she created for her multiculturalism course addressing stereotypes and social inequality in the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*. One of the culminating activities of this unit asked students to break into small groups to examine the different families of Maycomb portrayed in the book. Of considerable interest were the objectives she included as a part of this unit plan:

1. By examining the families of Maycomb, students will note differences between them such as class and education.
2. Students will discuss whether or not they believe a hierarchy in Maycomb exists.
3. Students will discuss how the author feels about the notion of a social hierarchy and how she uses characters in her novel to critique such notions.
4. Through discussion, students will come to recognize how family/class differences contribute to the novel as a whole.

Students were then asked to create a visual representation of one of the families that reflected their social hierarchy, educational level, class, or dress style, based on information gleaned from the text. This unit in many ways integrated both the multiple intelligences and stereotyping knowledge Sandra gained from Professor Smith's class, and reflected Sandra's careful consideration for what she was being taught.

This attention to her coursework and to the use of tools she was offered were evident throughout the span of this study; of the three participants, Sandra most regularly referenced books and materials she was exposed to in college courses during her apprentice teaching semester. That said, because many of the texts and materials from her courses did not directly critique schools or teaching practices that served to reproduce the status quo, Sandra was left with a grab bag of strategies and tricks to draw from in her apprentice teaching – none of which seemed to address directly the type of diversity she was experiencing in her school. There seemed to exist a palpable avoidance of most

controversy – and an eschewing of fundamental issues that could have fortified the contemplation of inequity in schools or social justice. Sitting in on the preservice teachers' seminar – a three week marathon that preceded their entry into schools for their apprentice teaching – I heard their instructor use the turn of phrase "multiple voices" rather than multicultural literature (J. Saunders, observation, September 12, 2006). Having asked Dr. Masters (a pseudonym) if she was purposeful in that word choice, given multiculturalism was a contentious notion in the larger academic and political dialogue (Cochran-Smith, 2003), she remarked, "No, I just prefer multiple voices" (M. Masters, interview, July 5, 2007).

Similarly, although Dr. Masters used Linda Rief's (1992) well-regarded text *Seeking Diversity* in her courses, there were limited opportunities for the preservice teachers to grapple with the role that race, ethnicity, gender, class, etc. would play in the classroom context (J. Saunders, observation, September 14, 2006). Understandably, this might have occurred as a result of Dr. Masters' concerns about opening up a Pandora's Box in terms of what might rise up out of such conversations. However, given the absence of clarity or a consistent message about the necessity of approaching cultural diversity with a clear emphasis on effecting change, the preservice teachers' fumbled in their attempts to articulate their own definitions of multiculturalism. Similarly, they found it difficult to adopt culturally responsive practice.

Grossman's (1999) work suggests that the superficial application of any tool does little to engender efficacy. Given that cultural artifacts and usable tools exist inside figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998), and an individual's ability to use them appropriately is necessary to become proficient and accepted, we turn to some of the academic tools that the participants had access to during their teacher preparation program. What follows are examples of Jenny, Matilda, and Sandra's attempts to test out

the tools drawn from their varied figured worlds, and how their use of tools increased their ability to see and position themselves not just as learners, but as burgeoning educators.

Employing the Tools

One of the tenets of Vygotsky's (1986) legacy is the concept of semiotic mediation, which occurs as learners use cultural and psychological tools to grow in their thinking. These tools "are central to human thought and development…[and] are the means through which children internalize cultural knowledge and exercise their own mentation" (Smagorinsky, 1995, p. 107). Just as school-age students mediate their learning in social situations, the preservice teachers studied grew in their thinking and practice as they worked in the figured worlds of their assigned schools. What this study suggests is that preservice teachers' experiences afforded them the opportunity to consider not only the tools (notions, strategies, concepts) they procured through their teacher education program, but also what was absent. What follows are the challenges Jenny, Matilda, and Sandra faced as they attempted to draw on the tools they obtained from a range of figured worlds, and to employ them in a manner appropriate for their students. Discussed are their efforts to animate these tools and additionally, their budding understandings of the impact of the figured world of policy that at times served to impede their work.

Blending Tools from Differing Figured Worlds

In her discussion about the multiple meanings of multicultural teacher education, Cochran-Smith (2004) asks, "What knowledge, interpretive frameworks, beliefs, and attitudes are necessary to teach diverse populations effectively, particularly knowledge and beliefs about culture and its role in schooling…[and] what else do [preservice

teachers] need to know?" (p. 145). Data from this study suggests that the what else depended upon the participant's apprentice teaching situation and the lived experiences she brought into the figured world of the classroom. Despite their inability to link multiculturalism with culturally rich classroom practice and increased student learning, the preservice teachers collectively valued their teacher preparation program and the professors and cooperating teachers with whom they had worked. The one critique raised more than once was the absence of in-depth preparation for working with ESL students, even though this was amid the goals of their advanced methods course (Masters, 2006). In an email after the completion of her apprentice teaching, Matilda expressed this frustration:

> I really think the program needs at least one ESL class to prepare its students. Teaching ESL is a reality that many of us thought we wouldn't face – we never talked about our ELL students either, and it's safe to assume that we had them in our classes. We assume that because students are in high school that they've had enough time for language acquisition and learning … I could have done tons of other things for those students that I didn't have a clue how to do (M. Andrews, personal communication, October 5, 2007).

Although knowledge of a second language is not a necessity in working with ESL students, Sandra was equally concerned. While she acknowledged that Professor Masters regularly asked her advanced methods students, "How might you adapt this lesson for your English language learners?" Sandra was still uncertain about her abilities in this regard.

> I'm not too comfortable with ESL unless it's Spanish speakers, and then I wouldn't even know if I was doing it the right way, only because I would be relying on my own ability to understand them and communicate with them. We were talking about this yesterday [how] we don't get too much on ESL which we are kind of disappointed about … one of the girls [another preservice teacher] is struggling because she has Asian Americans but they don't all speak the same language…you have Vietnamese and Chinese and we were kind of just…when they touched on it in one of our classes it was Spanish, you know, which is a lot

> easier for us because at last we're around it more … (S. Martinez interview, October 27, 2006).

Despite Sandra's hesitancies in this regard, I saw her in two instances speaking Spanish with a few Latina students, once informally as they were walking as a class to the library to check out novels (J. Saunders, observation notes, October 30, 2006), and another as Sandra was attempting to clarify an assignment for these same students in class (J. Saunders, observation notes, October 17, 2006). In Texas, Sandra's moderate proficiency in Spanish was advantageous, due to the large number of Spanish-speakers in our schools. This did not assuage her concern for students who spoke other languages, however, or for her colleagues whose only language was English.

Jenny was less bothered by the lack of ESL training and more frustrated by institutional practices that she felt inhibited her students' growth. Thus, although she had limited skills in addressing students still learning English, she sought to position herself as their advocate nevertheless. She was especially concerned about two of her students who were still mastering English, but who were ineligible for ESL services—in all likelihood because they had taken the requisite courses provided by West High School and were passed along to grade level courses as a result of mainstreaming (J. Morgan, personal communication, October 29, 2006). In terms of language barriers, Jenny often relied on her knowledge of French to help her Spanish speakers increase their vocabulary and improve their literacy skills. Because both (Spanish and French) are derived from Latin, this was often the easiest way for her to connect word meaning to language for her students. Relying on the cognitive skills of previous worlds – in this case, Jenny's exposure to French from former classes and from living in a part of Louisiana where French was actively spoken – she cultivated a classroom environment that encouraged

students to draw back on their own understandings of words (J. Saunders, observation, November 9, 2006).

This interplay with words was a regular occurrence in Jenny's classroom; by allowing students to build connections between words they could define in Spanish with their English counterparts and opportunities to hone these language skills in both large group and pairing activities, Jenny was honoring the varied cultures of both herself and her students. By drawing on tools from former figured worlds, these preservice teachers were in many respects acknowledging the power of difference and pushing back from deficit thinking. And, while they expressed concerns for their abilities regarding how to approach emerging language learners, Jenny, Matilda, and Sandra each sought to overcome that obstacle by building on what their students knew.

Attempting to Employ Socioconstructivist Tools

Much has been written about the utility of socioconstructivism as a learning tool in the classroom and as a means for increasing equity in schools; indeed, State University's College of Education codified this thinking in its mission statement. Vygotsky (1986) saw intellectual development as "social in origin and reliant on tools and signs for the mediation of mental processes" (Smagorinsky, 1995); among the tools necessary to grow as learners are thinking and speech. The English classroom is clearly an appropriate place to cultivate these tools; through the use of literature and writing students are able to consider a whole host of disparate (and often, conflicting) points of view. Moll (2000) writes,

> we are moving toward a more dynamic, processual notion: that cultural life consists of multiple voices, of unity, as well as discord, including an imperfect sharing of knowledge… of human actions that are always creative in the face of changing circumstances. That is, we seek culture in human practices, situated in people's involvement with (and creation of) the multiple contexts that constitute their social worlds (p. 257-258).

Thus, as students are offered a variety of contexts and overlapping worlds, they are better equipped to understand themselves and their own worlds. How their teachers attempt to bridge these different lived experiences relies in large part on their own unique histories. Having experienced differing figured worlds, Jenny, Sandra, and Matilda's classroom experiences were equally varied. The tools they employed to connect with students and nurture learning in social contexts diverged as well.

Matilda, who was media savvy and a vast consumer of pop culture and video games, often used references that were valuable to her students in learning situations. She excelled at helping students connect what they were studying in class to media and current events, building on outside knowledge to reinforce learning. Matilda often used references to media to which her students could relate. In an observation the semester earlier, she used clips from the television show *The Office* prior to having students construct a resume (J. Saunders, observation notes, March 10, 2006); during her apprentice teaching semester, familiar movies (*Titanic*, *Pay it Forward* as examples) regularly peppered classroom conversations.

Data collected from an observation notes a discussion about the word, prerogative, which was used during a review of common SAT words. Matilda had provided students with graphic organizers to go along with this lesson, that included boxed areas for the following: a block for a definition and synonyms, a block for antonyms, a block for a sentence using the word, and a block for students to draw a picture that represented the word and/or trigger visual memory. Matilda first asked the class if they recognized the word; when students hesitated (many mumbling possible definitions), she asked, "Who remembers the song 'That's My Prerogative' by Britney Spears?" Students were then allowed to partner up in pairs or small groups to consider

the song and what prerogative meant, now that they had a context for its use. A few students mouthed lines from the song that they remembered, while others sought dictionaries for clarification. In this manner, students were able to construct meaning using a variety of resources (some written and some human) and to rely on sociocultural tools to enhance their learning (J. Saunders, observation notes, October 4, 2006).

Jenny too enjoyed using film clips to help students understand over-arching themes in literature and recognized its value in terms of connecting students to texts. What is significant about these preservice teachers' use of media and pop culture was that they were able to "bridge traditional texts … [for] urban students of color [who] are generally less motivated by [a] culturally alienating curriculum and fail to achieve at comparable levels to their peers in more affluent areas" (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005, p. 285). After reading *Of Mice and Men* by Steinbeck, she brought in film clips from *I Am Sam*, and had students connect the protagonists and their experiences using a graphic organizer representing likes and differences. This handout also included the rights of individuals with disabilities and the responsibilities of the larger public and governmental agencies to protect those with disabilities (J. Saunders, observation notes, March 27, 2006).

One of the original questions of this study was "In what manner are preservice teachers employing a funds of knowledge approach (Moll, 2001, 2000; Moll et al., 1992, 2005) during their apprentice teaching semester?" Upon closer examination, I discovered that the participants had had little exposure to Moll's work. I began then to look for how the preservice teachers used prior knowledge to elicit information (in this sense, cultural capital) that their students brought into the classroom that was reflective of their home lives and prior figured worlds. The use of media in the classroom seemed directed at tapping into the prior knowledge and experiences of their students and to bridge these

experiences to literature and writing. I then began documenting moments when the conditions of the classroom allowed students to work together to co-construct knowledge.

As was discussed earlier, Sandra's students told (and wrote) stories of both violence and privilege; Sandra then used this information in two ways, in helping students select interesting books for their outside (home) reading assignments, and in strengthening their writing through one-on-one conferences with students. The writing process – which required students to work collectively to perfect one another's writing – was in full evidence in Sandra's classroom (J. Saunders, observation notes, October 13, 2006), and students were given a great deal of freedom in selecting their topics; other than one required piece of writing each six weeks (for example, a persuasive piece) students were allowed to write in the genre (and purpose) of their choosing (S. Martinez interview, October 27, 2006).

The classroom configuration, with tables that housed groups of students (of typically, four to six students) rather than individual student desks, they were encouraged to help one another on assignments. Like Jenny, who believed "students learn best when they learn from each other" (J. Morgan, personal communication, July 2, 2006), Sandra purposefully asked the students to share their thoughts with their table or to brainstorm as a small group before coming back together for a whole class discussion (J. Saunders, observation notes, November 17, 2006). Having the opportunity to test out their ideas with peers first seemed to increase their willingness to then speak up in front of the larger class. By employing the tool of socioconstructivism, each of the participants was able to meet one of their collective goals: connecting with students. Perhaps more importantly, the wielding of this tool also furthered their students' capacity in that they were able to engage in meaning-making with one-another, an integral part of the learning process. Given the opportunity to share not just their knowledge, but to intersect with other

students' figured worlds, added a layer of depth for both the students and their young teachers.

Research on figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998; Luttrell & Parker, 2001; Pennington, 2007; Urrieta, 2007b) discusses at length cultural artifacts – which can be literal or figurative – that are representative of a particular figured world. This notion of artifacts draws directly from Vygotsky (1986) and is connected to his work about the mediation of tools in social settings. Holland, et al (1998) describe artifacts as things which "have a history of development in relation to particular tasks, undertaken by people in particular environments" (p. 62). Thus, the artifacts of teaching – lesson plans, student work, grades, pedagogical practice, etc. – become richly hewn tools as preservice teachers gain efficacy. By employing the tools and/or artifacts of socioconstructivism, Sandra, Jenny, and Matilda were successful in two ways; they became more effective practitioners in the sense that they could better scaffold student learning, and they grew in their understanding about their positions as educators. We will see in a later section what occurred as the participants strove to empower their students even further, by challenging them to take up leadership roles in the classroom. For now, the discussion will turn more problematic, as we consider the curriculum and its reproduction of the status quo.

Burgeoning Awareness about the Status Quo

Researchers (Freire, 2005; Lee, 2003; Moll, 2000; Smagorinsky & Fly, 1993) widely agree that literacy is a social endeavor, and that students benefit when learning together. Two decades ago, Scribner (1984) acknowledged,

> the single most compelling fact about literacy is that it is a social achievement… [and is] an outcome of cultural transmission. Literacy abilities are acquired by individuals only in the course of participation in socially organized activities with written language (p. 8).

Like Freire (2005), Scribner recognizes that literacy should be an empowering experience, creating "a critical consciousness through which a community can analyze its conditions of social existence and engage in effective action for a just society" (Scribner, 1984, p. 12). Additionally, Scribner argues for literacy that is both functional and self-enhancing, and a variety of educational approaches (both in and out of schools) that will nurture these multi-literacies while simultaneously benefiting the larger society. Advocates of New Literacy Studies (NLS) like Street (2003) support the notion of multiple literacies, but worry that governmental intervention in employing literacy (particularly, functional literacy) programs that reproduce "power relations, often of a colonial kind" (p. 15), thus inhibiting other (perhaps more practical or transcendent) forms of literacy – forms that are culturally laden and context specific.

We are seeing the results of just such a governmental intervention in the form of *No Child Left Behind*. In an effort to respond to the standards and testing movement in Texas, City School District developed a detailed curricular model, employing complex matrices and Instructional Planning Guides (IPGs) to ensure consistency in terms of content delivery for teachers (City Independent School District, 2007). Jenny's cooperating teacher, Ms. Bacon, was on the receiving end of a practical problem for English educators created by the guide: recommendations for what literature was taught were included in the matrix, and there were simply not enough sets of novels to go around. Expected to teach a particular text inside a window of time created competition for texts, as was earlier described concerning Jenny's class-set of *The Crucible*, which was taken from her room before the students had completed their unit of study. And, while the state mandated curriculum required that students read a wide array of authors (including people of color and women) "to increase knowledge of his/her own culture,

the culture of others, and the common elements across cultures" (TEA, 2006), the IPGs relied largely on the canonical, White/male literature base.

It is in this environment – where the figured worlds of the curriculum specialists housed in the central district office who produced the IPGs, the worlds of the administrators who expected teachers to follow along with the guides, and the worlds of the teachers who found their curriculum significantly limited (McNeil, 2000) collided. Of the participants studied, Jenny was the most outspoken critic of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation; too, she seemed most capable of articulating how the response to the legislation impacted her culturally diverse students.

> Everyone needs some kind of organization, some kind of standard. The problem today, I think, is that legislators and administrators are going about it in the wrong way: They should stop trying to regulate HOW we teach and micromanaging WHAT we teach, and focus on the research...HOW students learn best and WHAT they really need to know and need to be able to do upon graduating high school. Maybe they were on the right track at first with all this NCLB and TAKS mumbo jumbo; now, someone needs to speak up with an alternative to the way they're going about it. Maybe the feds could let a little more money trickle down into a reliable field like research instead of blowing money on Xeroxes of standardized, day-by-day curriculum guides (J. Morgan, written reflection, March 30, 2006).

This critique of national policy was part of an ongoing conversation she had with Ms. Bacon (who felt similarly about the federal policy) during her apprentice teaching. During one of our meetings to talk about her classroom experiences, Jenny moved on to a discussion about two bumper stickers that Ms. Bacon had on her car. One read, "NCLB: Fixing everything with a test!" and another said, "No [written in handwriting above the print with a carrot, as if indicating an editor's mark] white, upper-class, English-speaking [and then returning to the regular font] Child Left Behind." Jenny acknowledged, "At first, I really didn't understand the second bumper sticker, but [now] … every day when I

walk by her car again, the stickers make more and more sense to me" (J. Morgan, personal communication, November 2, 2006).

Of the three participants, Jenny's apprentice teaching experience was likely the most challenging in terms of how students were positioned within the figured world of West High School. While Matilda worked with a largely Latino population at her placement, her students were enrolled in Pre-AP courses; Sandra taught both Pre-AP and grade level courses, but her school was one of the more privileged in the district. Perhaps some of Jenny's frustrations came from her philosophical belief in equality and social justice; her position as a teacher in a school that was essentially dichotomized – between those who were on a college track (and who were largely middle/upper class Whites), and those who were placed in grade level courses (who were largely Latino and African-American) – did little to tamp down her worries about what the future held for her students. It was likely that this concern was instrumental in Jenny's decision to enact the innovative and culturally responsive pedagogical practices, which will be considered in a later section.

With that said, during a semester in the field following Sandra, Matilda, and Jenny I discovered one perplexing trend that seemed to reinforce the status quo: despite the fact that each had clearly advocated for the use of multicultural literature as a part of their obligation as English teachers, I witnessed only one instance where this goal was realized. That selection, "The Treasure of Lemon Brown," by Walter Dean Myers, was used by Sandra in her 8th grade class, and led to an interesting writing activity about what students themselves treasured in their lives. In this manner, Sandra was able to incorporate a diverse writer and simultaneously draw on prior knowledge from her students.

Among the other literary choices taught during the semester were: *The Crucible*, Antigone, Dante's *Inferno, Of Mice and Men*, and *The Things They Carried*. While some of these selections represented world authors, the majority were White men. Given that there were large numbers of culturally diverse learners in each of the participants' classes, the absence of writers of color and women writers was troubling to say the least. Much of this was out of the participants' control, since the IPGs (and the cooperating teachers, to some degree) largely directed which literary selections were used in the classroom. That said, evidence existed that despite directives in the state-mandated curriculum requiring the study of culturally diverse authors, local practice served to reinforce the hegemony, thus institutionalizing the status quo. This is not to suggest that the preservice teachers studied did not labor tirelessly to enact moments of culturally responsive practice, which will be elaborated on in the next section. Rather, it is to better describe the figured worlds where Jenny, Matilda, and Sandra wielded the tools of their profession.

4.7 THEME THREE: BURGEONING AGENCY/ARTIFACTS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

In their discussion of emerging identity and agency, Holland et al. (1998) describe four contexts in which identities are authored and "worked and reworked on the social landscape" (p. 270). Identity development is not a static process – identities are in constant flux as people move in and through various figured worlds. The first of these contexts is the figured worlds that individuals inhabit, the spaces "in which interpretations of human actions are negotiated" (p. 271). The second context of identity is positionality, which is "inextricably linked to power, status, and rank" (p. 271).

Drawing on Bakhtin's research on heteroglossia, whereby humans are continuously "producing meaning in dialogue" (p. 177) with both themselves and others,

the third context is the space of authoring. Additionally, this context makes us of Vygotsky's (1986) zone of proximal development. As neophytes practice meaning-making inside figured worlds and work in dialogue with others, they learn to author their experiences with both their own words and those drawn from others with more experience within this figured world. The fourth context is that of "making worlds," where individuals "develop new social competencies" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 272). This context draws from Vygotsky's (1986) discussion of play, and acknowledges that these constructed worlds represent both "social experimentation as well as social reproduction" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 238). Thus, as novices attempt to author their experiences, they are taught the rules and limitations of a figured world, but still allowed to improvise within that world as they settle into their position. This is not to say that the novice is without power entirely; rather, "even within grossly asymmetrical power relations, the powerful participants rarely control the weaker so completely that the latter's ability to improvise resistance becomes irrelevant" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 277). The preservice teachers studied here were attempting to reconcile their understandings about teaching and learning from the various figured worlds within which they participated. These attempts to build connections and dialogue with more powerful members of their school worlds (cooperating teachers and other school personnel), students, and simultaneously begin to assume a new identity – that of educator – are explored in more depth in the next section.

Authoring Their Experiences

Research on figured worlds acknowledges that people author their experiences in cultural and social spaces; thus individuals hone their identities in relation to their work with others. It is valuable to note, however, that "agency lies in the improvisations that people create in response to particular situations" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 279). This

study's participants were initially reluctant to critique their assigned schools or deviate from the kinds of pedagogical practice they saw occurring under their cooperating teachers' direction. The absence of a critique might have reflected their vulnerable positions as novices, yet this behavior in many ways contradicted thoughts they had earlier expressed in interviews and written reflections. Matilda, Jenny, and Sandra began to show signs of increased agency as they gained confidence in moving within and across the differing figured worlds they were privy to. This occurred in one sense as they learned to adapt and employ the artifacts (notions, concepts) they carried from the university classroom into their apprentice teaching schools. Having made sense of these artifacts they began to use them and make attempts at improvisation. These attempts suggested a growing efficacy as teachers and an increased advocacy stance toward their students. Having acknowledged the limitations of being positioned as novices, the participants began to push out against these boundaries and incorporate their individual notions of effective teaching within the larger school (and educational) contexts.

Mediating Planning and Questioning Teacher Preparation

One of the ways that Sandra, Matilda, and Jenny began to author their experiences evolved organically as they became increasingly responsible for planning and pedagogy during their apprentice teaching semester. As noted earlier, the curriculum was in large part inflexible; where the participants had some measure of control was in their approaches and instructional practice. This flexibility was still problematic. Jenny found herself overwhelmed by how to tackle planning within the curriculum-controlled environment because of her lack of practice developing unit plans that aligned with the district curriculum during her university courses. She described much of what she what she learned as "crazy, all over the place 'fun activities' [that appeared] so pretty in the books" and included the use of thematic units. These 'fun activities' seemed

diametrically opposed to the world of schools, and Jenny acknowledged, "Teaching thematically is so wonderful. Okay, but when you hit that real classroom, with its quite specific real curriculum and real requirements, tell me how to fit that into the beautiful, lovely unit and lesson plans?" (J. Morgan, personal communication, June 26, 2007).

As the semester progressed, Jenny garnered strength as she directed her frustration toward creating student-centered classroom activities, much like the teacher described by Smagorinsky, Lakly, and Johnson (2002) in their pivotal article about acquiescence, accommodation, and resistance in young teachers. Positioned in such a way that she had no power in selecting her content, Jenny focused on developing units of study that provided students with opportunities to construct their own meaning, like the multi-genre unit that will be discussed at length in a later section. Interestingly enough, while Jenny expressed concern about some aspects of her teacher preparation, the multi-genre idea came directly from her advanced methods course. This seemed to reflect Bakhtin's (1981) discussion of inner and social speech, which suggests that

> in the makeup of almost every utterance spoken by a social person – from a brief response in a casual dialogue to major verbal-ideological works – a significant number of words can be identified that are implicitly or explicitly admitted as someone else's…Within the arena of almost every utterance an intense interaction and struggle between one's own and another's word is being waged, a process in which they oppose or dialogically interanimate each other (p. 354-355).

Thus, as Jenny was able to take another's word – or in this case, her professor's multi-genre unit idea – add to it and make it her own, she gained a sense of efficacy as a teacher. This negotiation of university learning and the practical reality of schools appeared with regularity in conversations with Jenny; her adoption of her professor's unit became meaningful only when she could animate it with her own language and students. As a result, Jenny was taking steps to thrive not only in the figured world of her school;

she was also achieving mastery in using a tool (Grossman et al., 1999) (in this case, a pedagogical practice) within this world.

Knowing and Challenging Their Students

As described by Ladson-Billings (1995a), culturally relevant teaching goes beyond just "good teaching" and includes both academic and cultural competence. While cultural competence and the development of a critical consciousness were less apparent in the classrooms of the preservice teachers studied, there was evidence that Matilda, Jenny, and Sandra held high expectations for their students' academic performance. Gay (2000) writes, "teachers who care hold [students] accountable for high-quality academic, social, and personal performance, and ensure that this happens. They are demanding but facilitative, supportive and accessible, both personally and professionally" (p. 50). This facilitative role was evident as each of the participants sought to build rapport and get to know their students well, believing that academic success and learning inside the classroom were inextricably linked to mutual trust and relationships. Both Sandra and Jenny spent time in-between classes talking with students. Jenny noted,

> I make an extra effort before class to try to get around to as many students as possible and, as I've seen Ms. Bacon do, talk about how their day/week/year is going. Kendra (a peudoymn) never fails to amaze me with the long list of Athletic Trainer duties she's had to pull off, in lieu of sleeping, the night before that class, and Pierre and I discuss our favorite TV show, House. (J. Morgan, written reflection, February 9, 2006).

Sandra discovered that despite her best efforts, she could not connect with all of her students on a personal level. In the case of two of her middle school girls she explained,

> Then there are a few like Laura and Mary (both pseudonyms) who dress and look a little more mature. They are probably part of the "popular" crowd. Often during group work you'll find these two, along with Mimi (a peudoymn), gossiping. I find it hard to reach these girls; they're polite, but certainly not as warm and friendly as some of the other students (S. Martinez, written reflection, March 27, 2006).

Undeterred, Sandra used her rapport with students in-between classes as a tool inside the classroom space. She regularly drew from those personal conversations and additionally, from prior in-class conversations, when trying to help students understand a difficult concept. When helping students annotate the poem, "The Witch" by Jack Prelutsky, Sandra regularly encouraged, "Come on, you can do this" as she circulated around the room. This encouragement, and her facility in tying the literary devices the students were studying (imagery, figurative language, stanza, and point of view) to an earlier poem suggested not only that Sandra believed her students were capable of doing the assignment; she believed in her own capacity to nurture their growth (J. Saunders, written observation, October 30, 2006).

Matilda mused,

> learning more about them gives me all these ideas about how I'm going to teach students like them. I'm going to ask lots of questions and get to know them personally so I know what questions will push their buttons in the way that they need to be pushed (M. Andrews, written reflection, April 1, 2006).

One of Matilda's students, Louisa (a pseudonym), described herself in the following manner, "You know how some people call people who read 'bookworms?' Well my friends call me a 'book anaconda' since I engulf them" (M. Andrews, written reflection, April 12, 2006). Matilda used this information – and additionally her knowledge about this student's love of the Harry Potter series – in classroom interactions. Louisa became the class expert on plot development in literature, and was drawn on regularly to assist other students with class assignments. Her enthusiasm appeared to be infectious too; when Louisa saw students refusing to work in class, she would encourage and cajole others to get moving, thus reinforcing Matilda's efforts to foster high academic standards (J. Saunders, observation notes, April 5, 2006).

In addition to knowing their students, the participants were exceptionally clear in explaining their goals and expectations to students. Each used rubrics as assessment tools, distributing these prior to assigning large projects, papers or presentations so that students would know in advance what qualified as exceptional work. Reflecting on teacher expectations Jenny wrote,

> There are so many studies that strongly suggest, if not prove, the crippling effect that lowered teacher expectations can have on student performance, and it blows my mind that the basic practice still seems to adhere to the old adage of, "regular class, expect regular work." RIDICULOUS, in my opinion (J. Morgan, written reflection, March 2, 2006).

The sentiments that Jenny expressed were equally evident in conversations with Matilda and Sandra, who both sensed that without high expectations, students would "only do enough to get by and not really learn all that much" (S. Martinez, personal communication, November 3, 2006). While articulating a vision of learning and getting to know their students were largely achievable goals for the preservice teachers, their ability to develop their own voice as teachers was a much more complicated matter.

Finding Their Voices and Developing an Advocacy Stance

The participants each had moments of hesitation during their apprentice teaching experience, particularly in terms of developing their voices and positioning themselves as teachers inside the classroom space. Jenny, for example, acknowledged a desire to trust in her own teaching philosophy, despite the limits of the curriculum and her position inside the figured world of West High School. In a follow-up conversation after her apprentice teaching, she explained, "I need to find my voice… by that I mean when another teacher challenges what I'm doing, I need to learn to stand up for what I know is right instead of saying, 'Okay, sorry, didn't know" (J. Morgan, interview, June 26, 2007). Matilda's concerns echoed her perceived (and tenuous) position as a visitor in the

classroom. “It’s kind of weird because I come in and I’m their teacher but then you know Ms. Holland is ultimately really their teacher. Like they… I see that they tend to go for her… they go past me sometimes… it kind of upset me at first” (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006). Matilda’s struggle to find her own voice and adopt the facilitative teacher persona she deemed necessary for effective teaching might have existed because of her fieldwork experiences prior to and including her apprentice teaching.

An earlier placement at a middle school required Matilda to adopt a rigid curriculum for struggling students that included “pre-prepared reading materials and the ancillary worksheets that went along with the reading passages” (M. Andrews, interview, July 19, 2007). The semester prior to her apprentice teaching, Matilda was given little flexibility in terms of planning and paired with a cooperating teacher who preferred direct teaching to the constructivist models Matilda was discovering in her teacher preparation courses. By the time Matilda began her apprentice teaching, she had had few opportunities to test out what she was learning and employ the facilitator’s role that she favored in conversations and reflective writing (J. Saunders, observation notes, November 1, 2006).

Despite these concerns, Jenny, Sandra, and Matilda all attempted to act as advocates for their students during their apprentice teaching semester. This was in many ways reflective of Parker’s (2003) assertion that educators must engage in dialogue with others culturally different from ourselves in order to truly develop communities that are both multicultural and inclusive of difference. Sandra saw her role as teacher extending beyond the subject matter, a role that involved “teaching them to be productive citizens, to be good people.” Sensing that by the time students were seniors they were already shaped in this regard, Sandra preferred middle school students who were “still impressionable for the most part” and capable of changing their minds and attitudes about

school and learning (S. Martinez, interview, November 7, 2006). Her interactions with students modeled the precepts of "good citizens/good people;" unflustered by one of her classes who would occasionally get unruly during pair/share or small group activities, Sandra would wait patiently to get their attention and redirect their behavior (J. Saunders, observation, October 30, 2006). In a semester of observations, Sandra never lost her poise despite a couple of trying incidents in the classroom. When one of her students (who was identified as emotionally disturbed) became agitated and acted out in the classroom, Sandra calmly called the office for assistance, isolated the student temporarily, and helped the rest of the class refocus on their work. Stepping out into the hallway the next period, Sandra spoke at length with this student, explaining what he would need to do to keep up with his assignments while suspended for three days. She ended this conversation with "I'll miss you. If you need anything at all, please email me" and a pat on the arm (J. Saunders, observation, November 3, 2006).

Jenny's advocacy came through both in her discussions with me about equity, social justice, and the limiting forces plaguing teachers and in her one-on-one interactions with students. Requiring them to keep journals that connected the literature they were reading to their lives, Jenny discovered a great many things about her students. "They'll talk about gangs, they'll talk about fights, they'll talk about their girlfriends, but the one thing they are more reticent to talk about it seems is their parent situation" (J. Morgan, interview, November 2, 2006). When asked how closely she read these pieces of writing, Jenny admitted, "I just put checks [marks] on many of them, but I read several [of each student's] closely. Good thing I did because there was a suicide thing, which scared the crap out of me… what if I had never read it?" In this situation, Jenny drew on Ms. Bacon, a counselor, and one of the student's friends to offer support to the student. When Cassandra (a pseudonym) – a quiet student who rarely spoke in class – admitted in her

journal her concerns about her parents' pending divorce, Jenny wrote to Cassandra about her own parents' divorce during high school, assuring her that things would get better. In terms of participation, after this written communication Cassandra increasingly offered to take a leadership role in the classroom and assisted Jenny in tasks, like passing out papers and getting equipment ready for the day (J. Saunders, observation, December 3, 2006).

Despite Matilda's difficulty in viewing herself as a full-fledged teacher, an on-going situation with a student (Shannon, a pseudonym) compelled Matilda to consider advocating on her behalf. One of the few non-negotiables in Mrs. Holland's classroom was the matter of bringing food and drinks into the room. Despite this firm stance, Shannon repeatedly tested Matilda and Mrs. Holland by entering the room with a soda or snack. At one point, Mrs. Holland became so frustrated with Shannon that she told her, "You need to put those [chips] away or I'm going to shove one up your nose" and left the room (M. Andrews, interview, July 19, 2007). Alone in the room with an angry student, Matilda found herself in a dilemma; Shannon had put the food away, but began asking to use the telephone instead of completing her writing assignment. Matilda's suggestion, "Get your work done and then you can use the phone at the end of the period" pushed Shannon over the edge; as Matilda moved to help another student, Shannon told a friend, "She's so stupid." This resulted in a referral that later led to a conference with Shannon and her mother.

This was Matilda's first such parent meeting and she felt nervous; when she and Mrs. Holland discovered that Shannon's behavior problems had begun (both at home and at school) when her father died the year before, they agreed to try to be more accommodating of Shannon's outbursts. During the meeting, Shannon "told the group that she just didn't feel like I was as good of a student teacher as others she had experienced in other classes," which upset Matilda, although she didn't say so at the time

(M. Andrews, interview, July 19, 2007). This did seem to confirm Matilda's concern about the division of authority in Mrs. Holland's classroom.

Surprisingly, a couple of weeks later on Matilda's last day of apprentice teaching, Shannon came to class and asked Mrs. Holland to write her a letter of recommendation for a math/science after-school program geared especially for girls. This was a last minute request (the letter was due that day), and Mrs. Holland said, "If I have time." When Shannon came back at the end of the day to pick up her paperwork, Mrs. Holland instructed Matilda to just give Shannon the folder the recommendation information originally came in – without the letter of recommendation. Matilda felt horrible about being the "delivery" person for this task, and considered writing the recommendation herself, but didn't feel like she knew Shannon well enough to write an effective letter.

Seven months after the incident, Matilda still felt a lingering concern for Shannon, despite their problematic classroom interactions and her feeling of "being put in my place" by a student. She wondered,

> What might have happened had Shannon asked for the letter earlier? Might this have made a difference in her life? Might this step toward educational growth/attainment outside of school contributed to a more committed student inside the school? (M. Andrews, interview, July 19, 2007).

While Matilda did not take a direct action in this particular situation, her level of concern, interest, and compassion toward Shannon – despite the student's ill-treatment – seemed to suggest an evolving advocacy stance. Coupled with her willingness to work during her conference period, before, and after school to assist students who had difficulty with their assignments (J. Saunders, observation, November 17, 2006) additionally reinforced the appearance of advocacy in regard to Matilda. In telling this story, Matilda offered a parallel story of her own difficulties as a smart high school student who endured a difficult home life. Something about the experiences with Shannon resonated with

Matilda; as she conveyed the two stories it seemed clear that she saw herself in Shannon, yet struggled with how to behave in her new role as teacher. While it is true that in many of these examples, the advocacy stance the preservice teachers exhibited were not explicitly directed at marginalized students – via race, class, or gender – the willingness to take on the responsibilities required of an advocated suggested that the participants might move on to more explicitly direct their energies toward students with less agency.

This intersection of figured worlds – those of Matilda, Shannon, and the figured world of their shared classroom space – seem representative of the "wobble" discussed in the research (Fecho et al., 2005). The wobble is defined as "the authored space of uncertainty that lies between and among figured worlds," (p. 175) which "signals or calls attention to a shift in balance" (p. 179). The importance of the shift is that it allows participants inside a figured world to improvise a new course of action – to author a different response or alter their thinking. The section that follows documents what occurred as the preservice teachers began to attempt such improvisations, and in particular, to draw out what their students knew and to work within the zone of proximal development.

Addressing the "Wobble" in Literacy Practices

One of the unique characteristics of figured worlds is that they are constantly changing as we take action within them. These actions allow us to "determine our positioning within that world, author … a response to that world, and reconceive that world" (Fecho et al., 2005, p. 177). As noted earlier in this chapter, the participants were limited to a great degree by district-developed curricular guides; where they had some sense of choice was in how they chose to present the material to students. While this served to stifle their pedagogical creativity initially, through the course of their apprentice teaching semester the preservice teachers, like those in Fecho's (2005) study, began to

call into question the curricular limitations. This was particularly true in terms of teaching for breadth versus teaching for depth (Applebee, 1996). Jenny and Matilda in particular recognized the value in having students engage closely (and independently) with the literature they were studying and in extending a unit of study to include opportunities for students to connect literature to their own worlds. As described in the next section, these efforts elicited differing results in terms of student participation and understanding. However, theses examples too offer hope for other novices attempting to reconceive their practice within similarly structured curricular constraints, and in managing the insecurity of the "wobble" within the figured world of the classroom.

Reciprocity Within the Zone of Proximal Development

Data suggested a continuum of efficacy in terms of pedagogy among the study participants, particularly regarding their culturally responsive practice. As the semester progressed and Matilda, Sandra, and Jenny mastered some of the more mundane tasks of teaching – classroom management, lesson planning, and understanding their positions within the figured worlds of their schools – more sophisticated pedagogical practices emerged. One such practice was the burgeoning appearance of reciprocity inside the classrooms. This "reciprocity" should not be confused with Palincsar and Brown's (1984) description of reciprocal teaching, which employs a systematic method for improving reading using summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting (, pg. 29). Rather, the reciprocity discussed here reflected more of a shared space inside the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Typically, discussions about the ZPD center on a student's development by means of assistance from an adult or more capable peer (Vygotsky, 1978). This study documented moments when students were mediating preservice teachers' understandings about their sociocultural knowledge, and where students served as the more capable peer in imparting valuable this knowledge to their young teachers.

One such example of reciprocity was in Jenny's introduction of a multi-genre project, which served as a culminating event upon their completion of *The Crucible*. Working in small groups, students drew strips of paper that were printed with some of the opposing forces that existed in the play. Among the forces were: greed, power, and pride versus contentment and humility; revenge, jealousy, and betrayal versus forgiveness, loyalty, and faithfulness. Each group was expected to build connections between the opposing forces (and themes) represented in the play and poetry, music, pop culture, and art. Students were expected to draw on their own lives and experiences in this assignment, and encouraged to tie the play's themes to their understandings of the world. After spending several days in the library to locate poems, song lyrics, and artwork that they could then tie to their group's over-arching theme, students created presentation to explain their choices. To assess this activity, Jenny constructed a rubric which both she and the students would use to evaluate each group's work (J. Saunders, observation, October 30, 2006).

What made this assignment intriguing were the conversations and negotiations that occurred while students were planning their presentations. That Jenny encouraged students to take a leadership role in making their selections and allowed them to use music and poetry of their choice (including lyrics that might otherwise be considered inappropriate in the classroom context) produced a noticeable excitement in the classroom. One of the groups – who were focusing on revenge, jealousy, betrayal versus forgiveness, loyalty, and faithfulness for their presentation – shared with me a photocopy of a painting where a blind guitarist was chained to a monkey. When I asked the group how this piece of art corresponded with the play and their over-arching forces, a student explained,

> The monkey is like John Proctor's wife, chained to her husband. But if you look closely you can tell that the monkey is not all that upset about the situation because of its body language – the faithfulness and loyalty win out in the end, even if the monkey is frustrated by being bound (J. Saunders, observation, November 2, 2006).

What makes this transaction (and many other similar transactions) significant was that it occurred in a grade level classroom that Jenny described as "a dumping ground for students who did not fare well in other English teachers' classrooms" (J. Morgan, personal communication, October 17, 2006).

That students were allowed to construct their own meanings (Freire, 2005) and use artifacts (music, art, poetry) from their own figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) added an extra layer of meaning for students. As is reported in Ladson-Billings' (1995a) study of effective teachers of African-American students, Jenny "encouraged the students to act as teachers, and they themselves [like Jenny] often functioned as learners in the classroom" (p. 163). This reciprocal arrangement created moments of levity during the presentations that followed. When one of the groups chose the country and western song, "I Loved Her First" that corresponded to their theme of loyalty, members of the audience groaned in distaste. Jenny countered, "Hey, I had to listen to Bone Thugs-N-Harmony all morning, so be open to this," which was greeted with laughter from the class (J. Saunders, observation, November 7, 2006). Focusing on the opposing forces of persecution versus tolerance and compassion, another group blended Rudyard Kipling's poem "If," David Lehman's "A Little History," a portrait of Jesus Christ, and Akon's song "Locked Up" for their presentation. When discussing the latter, the group drew a connection between those accused of being witches in *The Crucible* with the narrator of the song who was accused of stealing a car when he could not find the registration paperwork during a traffic stop. A brief discussion of injustice and power evolved as a part of this group's presentation (J. Saunders, observation, November 7, 2006).

The success of this project seemed to rely on the confianza (mutual trust) (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004) that Jenny nurtured insider her classroom; of the three participants, her students shared their personal experiences in class with the greatest frequency. Reciprocity worked in a multi-dimensional manner, where both teacher and students were afforded opportunities to serve as expert, thus moving through two separate (but overlapping) zones of proximal development. Students provided scaffolding to assist Jenny in understanding their prior knowledge and lived experiences; she in turn expanded her pedagogical practice to adapt to these new understandings and foster relevant connections between her students' lives and the English/language arts curriculum. Again, the inclusion of the term "reciprocity" should not be confused with the process delineated by Palincsar and Brown (1984), but rather viewed as a borrowing of the term for a largely different interaction. In this manner, the reciprocity occurs within a shared space between teacher and student – the space where their figured worlds intersect and the representative tools, artifacts, and knowledge of each world overlaps.

In a similar attempt to engage students and position them as the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978), Matilda was met with greater resistance. Working in groups of three, Matilda asked her students to become resident experts of one Canto (or, chapter) from Dante's *The Inferno*. They were expected to create a presentation where they explained the Canto in great detail – including the level of hell, sin, and punishment described by Dante – produced a visual representation that corresponded to the level, and analyzed the literary devices (imagery, allusion, irony, for example) Dante employed in his writing. Each group was then responsible for working together to craft essays similar to those they would later write for the Advanced Placement exam that centered on their particular Canto (J. Saunders, observation, November 6, 2006).

To facilitate this group work, Matilda modeled a presentation of Canto XX, where Tiresias (whom students were familiar with, having studied Opedipus and Antigone earlier in the semester) and other soothsayers were forced to walk forward for eternity with their faces pointed backwards – their punishment for acting as fortune tellers during their lives on earth. Matilda used paper masks to give the appearance that her face was on the back of her head (and the back of her head faced forward) as she acted out the Canto (J. Saunders, observation, November 7, 2006). During their own scheduled presentations, however, Matilda's students were halting and uncertain in front of the class. Despite Matilda's reassurance to the class, "I'm not going to let you stand up here and just stumble, I'm going to ask questions to guide you" (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006), students often looked to her and Mrs. Holland for cues that they were successful in their task, rather than looking to one another. Observation notes corroborated this and acknowledged an apparent learned helplessness that was a repeated artifact of the class environment (J. Saunders, observation, November 14, 2006).

While this project was in some ways similar to Jenny's multi-genre activity – it involved student-generated understandings and allowed students to co-construct knowledge – the absence of relevance and the lack of connection to students' lives (Moll, 2001, 2000) produced lackluster presentations. In many ways, the students' prior knowledge was not only unacknowledged, it was diminished altogether. Where Jenny's students were active participants as audience members (asking questions, evaluating the others' work), Matilda's students passively took notes that would later be used when they took an exam over The Inferno. There was less of a collective and mediated accomplishment in the task; while students were supposed to brainstorm ideas and help each other map out their final analysis essays over Dante's work, they chose instead to sit in their assigned groups, but work independently (J. Saunders, observation, November

14, 2006). Thus, while Jenny's group activity seemed to be both "culturally validating and affirming" and centered on teaching "to and through the strengths of students" (Gay, 2000, pg. 29), Matilda's lacked a certain complexity. Given that students were given few options to extend their learning or directly connect their canto to cultural frames that resonated with their own experiences, this became a bit of a hollow exercise in following directions rather than a meaningful cultural exchange. This is not to say that the Inferno project was without merit. Rather, this example is employed to juxtapose the two and reinforce the value of reciprocity within the ZPD as a tool in the English classroom.

Addressing the Issue of Social Justice

One of the questions this study strove to answer was how well preservice teachers were adopting notions about culturally responsive teaching in their apprentice teaching experiences in secondary English/language arts classrooms. However, it was difficult to gauge the preservice teachers' performance in some instances because of my role as a researcher and my chosen methodology. Taking an interpretivist stance was problematic in that it required observation without judgment, and an attempt to understand events and actions untinged by my own feelings and experiences as a classroom teacher. Having a social justice stance no doubt impacted not only what I looked for, but what I saw in Matilda, Jenny, and Sandra's pedagogical practice. In her discussion about transforming teacher education to meet the needs of changing demographics in public schools, Nieto (2000) concedes "that most approaches to multicultural education avoided asking difficult questions related to access, equity, and social justice… questions that strike at the heart of what education in our society should be" (p. 180). This study seemed to confirm the difficulty preservice teachers had in parlaying a disposition toward equity and social justice in their daily practice with students; opportunities to extend just such a conversation inside the classroom went unacknowledged in several instances.

A conversation with Jenny surfaced a clear commitment to equity and aversion to the status quo,

> First, let me say that of all classroom issues, diversity is the one that is most often on my mind, the most pervasive by far. Part of the reason I became a teacher is because I've been in too many situations where I was appalled at a teacher or authority figure's lack of sensitivity to a diverse student body or youth population, and most of the reason I want to teach "regular" kids, and not honors, is so that I can be a part of correcting these egregious types of ignorance or apathy on the part of those in charge, those in "power," so to speak (J. Morgan, personal communication, March 23, 2006).

Jenny worked diligently to offer opportunities for students to draw on their own understandings to scaffold literacy practices (Street, 2003) inside the social realm of the classroom. However, helping students to take this information and then look outward – at other figured worlds, at the institutional practices that reinforce and reproduce inequity – was absent from her practice. One such instance occurred during a class discussion of the character Danforth, the judge from *The Crucible* who embodied an inflexible "law and order" disposition and who ultimately sentenced many innocent victims to death during the Salem Witch Trials. Attempting a connection between the play and current events, one of Jenny's students commented, "yes, but Bush is doing the same thing Danforth is doing with national security [under the auspices of] maintaining the integrity of the country and morale. But in truth, it's really insulting" (J. Saunders, observation, October 24, 2006). Jenny was pleased by this exchange, in particular because according to her, the student making the connection was not typically an "A" student. That said, she was equally alarmed because it opened up an opposing argument by two girls in the class who had brothers in the military and who were unwilling to hear the President criticized during a time of war.

Ultimately, the conversation was cut short by Jenny who said afterwards, "I was thinking, 'Oh yeah, that's great… anyway, we've got to do this now.'" She seemed ill-

equipped to moderate an all-out argument in the classroom and was sheepish about the interaction, saying, "I did not bring it [Bush and the war] up" to me after class (J. Morgan, personal communication, October 24, 2006). By changing the subject and redirecting students to another assignment, she avoided altogether an opportunity to commence a conversation about leadership and authority – a conversation that might have laid the groundwork for future discussions about justice, power, and inequity.

Despite a professed interest in making explicit the inequity existing both in schools and the larger world, Sandra too circumvented an opportunity to extend her students' thinking in terms of equality and equal treatment. Similar to Jenny, she acknowledged,

> A teacher sets the tone of her/his classroom early on… and while posters (which she had seen in several classrooms) supporting diversity and reminding students to value everyone is a great idea, you have to go further than just including a poster. Teachers need to address this issue with their students … I will not tolerate racism, sexism, or any other form of prejudice/discriminative behavior" (S. Martinez, written reflection, March 12, 2006).

As was discussed earlier, one of Sandra's students brought forth a complaint about the unequal distribution of discipline concerning dress code violations. The students purported that while she (an African-American student) was sent to the office for wearing a spaghetti-strapped shirt, she passed several similarly attired White students in the hallway who were not punished. Like Jenny, after reassuring the student, "That's not right," Sandra elected to redirect the conversation rather than seize the opportunity to have a richer conversation about what the student's experience might mean in the larger context of the school, or to ask students if they had experienced similar incidents (S. Martinez, interview, October 27, 2006).

Matilda, who has working with Pre-AP sophomores, came the closest to engaging in conversations about inequality.

> Yeah, we talked about gender roles and how you know Creon, the king, (in Antigone) keeps talking about 'Well she's just a woman, and can't my son find another woman to marry?' And so we talked about the role of a woman in Greek times and how she was just expected to marry and have babies…pop them out and that's pretty much how it was. And so every time Creon makes this really shitty comment toward a woman, it reflects the time and he yeah there was a power thing going on definitely (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006).

These class discussions further developed some of her students' thinking about gender as evidenced in essays they wrote about gender roles in the ancient world. However, Matilda acknowledged that the (few) male students she had in her class chose to focus on Creon in their analysis essays, and to reinforce masculine stereotypes. Thus, even though he is largely a despicable character in *Antigone*, in their written work Matilda's male students respected Creon for "doing the right thing, he was a good ruler because he got people to follow his laws and rules."

When I asked if Matilda had considered opening up a discussion about man's laws versus God's laws [which are central ideas to the play] and tying that to our larger national conversation about the separation of church and state, she resisted (M. Andrews, personal communication, November 10, 2006). Leland and Harste (2005) note,

> literacy is best understood as a nonneutral form of cultural practice that positions readers in certain ways. To be literate in the fullest sense, readers need to be able to take a critical perspective and interrogate the assumptions that are embedded in texts as well as the assumptions they bring to these texts" (p. 65).

Taking this critical perspective occurs for both students – as readers of literary text inside the English classroom – and preservice teachers – as readers of curricular texts related to their field of expertise. Both of these instances require an acknowledgement and evaluation of assumptions that readers bring to and take from text. By not nurturing this critical stance regarding literacy, the preservice teachers were additionally limiting their students' capacity to make judgments about texts they were reading beyond the school day. Limiting opportunities for students to practice investigating their assumptions in

middle and high school could have long-term repercussions, particularly for those who aspire to attend (and succeed in) college where these types of analysis skills are highly valued. The participants' unwillingness and/or uncertainty about how to facilitate this kind of conversation – and indeed, interrogation of text – was problematic but not unexpected.

By sidestepping opportunities to cultivate and indeed enlarge students' thinking about justice, the preservice teachers additionally limited their students' ability to develop their social competencies, a necessary step in developing agency inside of figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998). This fourth context – where social competencies are developed – is necessary in helping novices engage in both social experimentation and social reproduction (p. 273). However, it seemed the participants found it easier to change the subject or avoid it altogether when sensitive issues surfaced in the classroom. Given their vulnerable positions, as practicing teachers who were wary of displeasing their cooperating teachers or creating controversy, it was understandable that they limited their experimentations.

Questioning the System of Testing

Where preservice teachers felt more comfortable in speaking out was in their critique of the testing mandates plaguing their schools and in questioning the impact that testing would have on their work as educators. Throughout the data collection process, Matilda, Jenny, and Sandra visited and revisited the topic of testing, evidencing both their concern and frustration with the larger figured world of schooling (Pennington, 2007) that relied on test scores to assess teacher and student progress. Sandra's fears were clear,

> I'm always nervous about what kind of teacher I'm going to be. I think my biggest concern right now is high stakes testing. My eighth graders are going to

> have to pass the TAKS test to go to the 9th grade. Of course I'm going to work my butt off with those kids. My job is to teach them, and that's what I plan to do. And I'm not about to settle for mediocre results. I have high expectations for my kids. But the fact that my students' results on the test will reflect me as a teacher and the school that I work at scares the heck out of me… I know I definitely don't want to resort to teaching to the test (S. Martinez, personal communication, July 7, 2007).

Both Sandra and Jenny worried that the emphasis on testing was taking more and more of their valuable class time and limiting opportunities to teach in a manner that might truly impact their students' – largely minority and/or from lower socioeconomic homes – performance on standardized tests (McNeil, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). Sandra remarked, "I feel like this emphasis on standardized testing has taken the true meaning of teaching out of the classroom… teachers are so pressed for time and schools are sanctioned if students don't do well" (S. Martinez, written reflection, April 7, 2006). Jenny's frustration was that in addition to the regularly scheduled test dates, and district-mandated benchmarking, her school participated in field-testing questions for future tests, stealing even more time from students who would likely benefit from in-class instruction.

> The students have to basically waste a day or two sitting in the cold gym, taking this test that means nothing to them, that really doesn't affect them at all … Future tests that won't be given until my 11th grade kids are long gone (J. Morgan, written reflection, March 30, 2006).

This collision of figured worlds – that of Jenny's apprentice teaching classroom and that of the larger testing mechanism – were of particular concern. Still learning to teach, Jenny was plotting to teach creatively in spite of the testing requirements.

> I'd rather work my butt off preparing wild and unorthodox materials and activities and have fun with learning than drop out of the teaching field two years into it because both me and my students are bored out of our minds (J. Morgan, written reflection, March 2, 2006).

In addition to worries that testing took away time from teaching and learning, Matilda contemplated the long-term effects of testing on her students' psyches.

> High stakes tests send the wrong message to students. For many of my seniors who have already passed the TAKS, I'm sure they feel like they can just coast through senior year because they've already passed the test that determines whether or not they can graduate or not. Even if it's not the only factor in their graduation, the more they hear "if you don't pass, you don't graduate," the more they will think it's the only thing that matters. And standardization of curriculum may make bad teachers better and ease the transition from one school to another for students, but it has the possibility to hold good, creative teachers back. I guess it depends on what kind of worker you are. If you work better in an environment that is pre-organized for you, it's wonderful, but if you want the freedom to organize your year on your own, then you're screwed (M. Andrews, written reflection, April 12, 2006).

Indeed, Matilda's worry that schools had become restrictive environment for teachers who aspired to create engaging and relevant learning opportunities for culturally diverse students was a foregone conclusion. Thus, the very students this system was created to assist – those lacking in cultural capital to achieve "competency" or "mastery" at the same levels as their White, middle-class counterparts – were paradoxically held back by the figured world of schools. Suffering under high stakes tests, practice tests, benchmark tests, and a limiting classroom curriculum, it was no shock that teachers and schools struggled to narrow the gap between the dominant and marginalized students on their campuses (McNeil, 2000, 2005).

What was interesting at Matilda's high school was how normalized talk of the TAKS testing had become. "During the daily announcements, a few pre-selected students get to broadcast their advice for passing the test to their peers. A notable one on Monday was 'don't do a half-ass job'" (M. Andrews, written reflection, April 12, 2006). The participants were at times parroting their cooperating teachers' impressions of the testing, but evidence suggested that like in Smagorinsky's (2002) work, they were gaining strength in resisting – if only in their thinking and conversations with me – the draw to teach to the test or allow standardization to consume their planning and execution of lessons.

4.8 CONCLUSION: THE HERO'S REBIRTH AND JOURNEY HOME

Figured world research (Holland et al., 1998; Luttrell & Parker, 2001; Pennington, 2007; Urrieta, 2007a) suggests that as individuals learn to author their experiences and to employ the tools and artifacts of the classroom setting that they grow in agency. This burgeoning agency seemed linked in part to Jenny, Matilda, and Sandra's budding comfort in their role as teacher. Certainly, they were consumed with attempting to make sense of their intersecting figured worlds. This blending of artifacts from their unique lived experiences, their lives as students in public (and in Sandra's case, private) schools, and the learning they had undertaken in their preservice teacher education program contributed to a halting confidence upon the completion of their apprentice teaching within a multicultural setting.

A question central to this interpretivist case study was how the multicultural knowledge preservice teachers gained in the university setting manifested in practice once they began working daily with public school students. Embedded in this question is the relationship between theory and practice, which is addressed powerfully by hooks (1994). She writes,

> when our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice. Indeed, what such experience makes more evident is the bond between the two--that ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other (p. 61).

While Jenny, Sandra, and Matilda exhibited differing strengths in their understandings of multicultural practice and their adoption of the tools of culturally responsive pedagogy, they each became cognizant of the complexities of and bond between theory and practice. In recognizing and attending to the strengths and capacity of their students – even given

the constraints of the curriculum and the restrictions placed on them inside the figured world of schools – the participants developed into promising practitioners.

Among the benefits of completing this project were the opportunities to witness growth in preservice teachers, both in their practice and thinking. Reflecting on her time in the field, Jenny wrote to me,

> I see pieces of myself in a lot of the kids. Maybe that's once secret to getting along with them: You have to be able to see part of yourself, even if it's just a teeny tiny part or if you have to dig and search for it under layers and layers of differences—in all of them. And I think that's possible (J. Morgan, personal communication, March 9, 2007).

While completing the data analysis process, I heard Maria Hinojosa (National Public Radio (NPR), 2007) offer Sandra Cisneros' definition for multiculturalism on her program Latino, USA. Hinojosa said, "Multiculturalism means being able to see yourself in the person most unlike you." I include it here because of its similarity to Jenny's impression of her time in the classroom, but also because it brings us full-circle in confronting the demographic imperative. Research tells us that educators are largely White, middle-class women working with an increasingly diverse (in terms of culture, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status) student population (Hodgkinson, 2002). That teachers are obligated to build on students' lived experiences, often derived from far different figured worlds from their own, to cultivate trust and nurture intellectual growth is non-negotiable.

Documenting preservice teachers' development over time offers both hope and frustration, and the participants studied here were no exception. Despite their challenges in learning to teach, Matilda, Jenny, and Sandra have moved into new figured worlds; as I complete this study they are finishing their first year of teaching. Matilda, who now teaches in a school populated with recent immigrants to the United States, has become involved in an Intel grant program called Digital Storytelling - Community Stories. Her

students are creating short films that document their experiences that will be entered into the City Student Film Festival. Jenny moved to a large suburban school district in another city, where she is experiencing a different kind of diversity; many of her students are citizens of Africa, India, and the Middle East. She is completing coursework for her Master's degree and continuing to push back against rigid curricular restraints and the focus on testing. After participating in a month-long writing process workshop, Jenny acknowledged a sense of dissonance between

> what I was being told and encouraged to do at the summer institute and what I knew, from experience, I could actually do in the classroom. I was frustrated that the self-same instructors who sat up there and touted independent reading and writing time and practices of that ilk (that) were employed by and, to a degree, ran, the secondary ELA program I knew included a very strict curriculum based not on these best practices, but on a half-decade-old canon (J. Morgan, interview, June 26, 2007).

Her attempts to negotiate these conflicting realities continues; Jenny has discovered that at times it is best for her to remain quiet in department meetings – in one sense acquiescing to the figured world of her new school – but then teach in the manner she believes is more appropriate for her students (and in that sense, resist) "once the door to my room is closed" (J. Morgan, interview, June 26, 2007).

After tutoring for a semester at a culturally diverse middle school in the spring after she graduated, Sandra accepted a full-time teaching post with the school for the following year. When we talked prior to the start of the year, she was worried that many of the teachers with whom she had worked as a tutor would struggle with envisioning her in the new role of teacher. A week before school started, Sandra discovered a change in her schedule; her principal had swapped out one of 8th grade English classes for an ESL course – something she felt ill-equipped to teach. Characteristically optimistic, Sandra viewed the swap as an opportunity to refine her Spanish-speaking skills.

In the hero's journey, it is less valuable that the hero has conquered the antagonist or challenged his/her foe, although that is typically what we think of when contemplating heroes. Rather, it is the amount of growth the hero exhibits at the completion of the cycle that is of greater importance. In this regard, data suggested that the participants exhibited a range of growth – both pedagogically and intellectually speaking. Having experienced vastly differing educational experiences from each other growing up, Matilda, Jenny, and Sandra exhibited varied strengths while working within the figured world of their apprentice teaching schools. Their capacity to thrive within these worlds was inextricably linked to how they were positioned – as teachers and as learners – and to a certain degree, to their willingness to reconceptualize their work and present opportunities for students to take ownership over their own learning.

In the end, like the young people discussed in Toni Morrison's 1993 speech to the Nobel Prize committee that was included in the Introduction, Sandra, Jenny, and Matilda were each seeking a context for their work as teachers. What seemed evident as a result of this study was that multiple contexts existed for each of the participants. The competing demands of their unique intersections of figured worlds resulted in equally varied responses to the constraints of the curriculum and their requisite responsibilities inside each of their classroom contexts. Their ability to flourish and create a space for themselves while honing their pedagogical practice was paradoxically linked to their ability to see themselves as in the [school] system, but not necessarily of the system. The final chapter, Chapter Five, details the findings and implications that arose as a result of this data analysis.

Chapter V: Study Findings and Implications

The goal of this study was to investigate the understandings of three secondary English/language arts preservice teachers and to document their multicultural practice during their apprentice teaching semester. In attempting to answer the original research questions, "How are understandings about multicultural education evidenced in preservice teachers' practice?" and "In what manner are preservice teachers employing culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy and funds of knowledge approaches during their apprentice teaching semester?" three themes were developed. Data from Theme One: *Negotiating the Figured World of Schools* details the participants' understandings of the inner workings of their assigned schools, their implicit rules, and the positioning that exists – for both teachers and students – within these structures. In Theme Two: *Acknowledging the Tools*, the preservice teachers' clarity about multiculturalism and the use of the principles of socioconstructivism is elaborated. These are juxtaposed with a whole host of constraints that the participants describe as limiting to their practice; feeling pressure to stay within an externally directed timeline, a canonical curriculum, and the requisite state-mandated tests, they begin to recognize the competing forces that restricte their use of pedagogically appropriate tools. After acknowledging these limitations, a growing sense of resistance – and budding agency – begins to surface, as is developed in Theme Three: *Burgeoning Agency*. The preservice teachers exhibite measured growth in culturally responsive practice, in drawing out prior knowledge, and in nurturing students as experts inside the classroom context. They additionally begin to

view themselves as possible agents of change, and are more willing to take on an advocacy stance in support of their respective students. The extent that the participants are able to effect change is limited – both by their positions as novices and their evolving ability to draw on artifacts and tools from prior figured worlds. Data suggests, however, that the preservice teachers are undeniably altered by their experiences in the apprentice teaching semester, and move into new figured worlds – their first teaching posts – with a more critical lens through which to view public schools.

As such, the themes detailed in Chapter Four culminate in the findings described here in Chapter Five. First, although each of the preservice teachers articulates a commitment to equity during interviews, written reflections, and conversations, their practice initially lacks substantive evidence of this ideal. Under closer inspection, it seems the participants hold fragmented understandings about multiculturalism and only a cursory knowledge of how to enact culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy inside the classroom. Opportunities to draw out students' lived experiences as a means for connecting to literature and writing are minimal; like their cooperating teachers, the preservice teachers tend to steer clear of controversy, changing the subject when heated topics arise in the classroom.

In addition to their lack of clarity about multiculturalism and avoidance of controversy, the second finding contends with preservice teachers' struggle to make meaning inside the figured world of the classroom and addresses their positions as novices in their assigned schools. This finding also describes how curricular decisions at the school district level – itself a figured world – serves to limit the participants' choices in terms of literature and content. Lacking in sophistication in how to incorporate additional authors or topics of study, the preservice teachers tend to reproduce the very status quo they had hoped to push back against.

The study's third finding suggests that as the participants begin to author their own experiences inside the classroom – and create a space for students to do the same – they increase in terms of agency. By building connections with their students, especially through the use of media and student-selected literature, the preservice teachers grow into more efficacious practitioners. As preservice teachers learn to blend the lessons gleaned from their varied and intersecting figured worlds, they become more capable of seeing the possibilities within that world and of viewing themselves as possible agents of change. These attempts at social experimentation do not entirely negate the problems revealed by this case study. However, they do offer hope in increasing our understandings of how novices make sense of the apprentice teaching experience, and the requisite responsibilities and burdens of learning to teach in culturally diverse, urban environments.

5.1 FRAGMENTED UNDERSTANDINGS IN THE CLASSROOM CONTEXT – MANAGING THE "WOBBLE"

Preservice teachers' understandings – or at minimum, acknowledgements – about the role that race, class, and ethnicity plays in schooling have a deep impact on their ability to construct meaningful classroom experiences for students. This is particularly true in the English/language arts class, where the teaching of literature and writing occur and where many students gain exposure to differing perspectives and points of view for the first time. In this study, the participants are noticeably aware that inequity exists in their schools; indeed, they readily acknowledge that grade level classes typically house students of color while advanced courses are predominantly White and express concern that their grade level students are not experiencing the same quality of education as those in the advanced placement track. This awakening brings to mind one of Paccione's (2000) early stages in developing a commitment to multicultural education, which she

calls an "emergent awareness of racism, inequity, or injustice," (p. 991). In this stage, teachers, often through a pivotal event or experience, are confronted first hand with inequity when they experience life outside of their "racial-cultural comfort zone" (p. 991). Having an emerging awareness about a problem is not productive, however, unless it is joined with action. Data from this study indicates that the preservice teachers feel ill-equipped to address these realities directly, especially in the early part of their apprentice teaching semester (M. Andrews, personal communication, September 15, 2006, S. Martinez, interview, October 4, 2006).

This feeling of inadequacy or "concern about if I'm even doing this right" (S. Martinez, personal communication, October 11, 2006) is likely reflective of the participants' uncertainty in how to adopt the strategies and tools they had exposure to in their preparation courses once they are expected to do so in their apprentice teaching. In once sense, this calls into question the degree to which they are prepared for entry into culturally diverse, urban schools. It is possible, however, that the uncertainty is the by-product of the disequilibrium that confronts novices passing over into a new, and at times intimidating figured world. Experiencing a shift in balance – where they were once positioned as students and are now asked to perform as teachers and assume the tools and artifacts of that profession – the preservice teachers struggle to gain footing inside the "wobble" (Fecho et al., 2005) among intersecting figured worlds.

These participants easily mastered the figured world of schools while they were students. They performed well in classes, had high grade point averages, and successfully completed their early fieldwork experiences. Applying these understandings in the world of work, where daily life in classrooms is far different from observing more practiced teachers or leading lessons only occasionally and over the course of a semester (which is the case with the fieldwork experiences), is a far more complex matter.

Entering into reflective conversations with preservice teachers after observing them teach (J. Saunders, personal communication, September 28, October 4, October 12, 2006), it quickly becomes clear that conditions exist that hamper their initial success as educators of culturally diverse students. One, the preservice teachers lack substantive understandings about multiculturalism and the responsibilities that these entail inside the figured world of the classroom. Two, there are noticeable barriers in place that hinder the participants' ability initially to enact culturally responsive pedagogical practice.

Misunderstandings of and Avoidance in Enacting Multicultural Education

The absence of a clear understanding of multiculturalism is evident from the data. While the participants have exposure to multiculturalism in one of their required courses and are in fact asked to create unit plans that center on a study of diversity – in this case, focusing either on a writer or color or on a novel that addresses the theme of social class or racial/cultural inequality – they are reluctant to employ these tools during their apprentice teaching. Conversations with the participants suggest that the multiculturalism course avoids "asking difficult questions related to access, equity, and social justice" which Nieto (2000) views as hallmarks of multicultural education. The syllabus for one of the required courses preservice teachers take included several assignments, among them: a personal biography, a bibliography of salient research, a case study (of a student from fieldwork experiences) and a book study. Missing from the assignments, however, is a direct link to diversity, and the role that race, ethnicity, class, or gender play in perpetuating inequity in schools. After meeting with the professor who teaches the course (in this case, a course centered on learning differences) and asking what types of classroom discussions she has with preservice teachers about equity and how to shape similar conversations with public school students, she acknowledges, "You know, I have not thought that through, but I need to think it through … the diversity

component" (P. Keller, interview, November 15, 2006). Absent a model for how to engage in just such conversations, the preservice teachers reproduce this same behavior, deflecting similar difficult conversation with their own students.

Data described in an earlier section suggests that when the participants come face to face with opportunities to talk with their students about equity and social justice – which occurs multiple times, for each of them – they tend to avoid the conversation altogether. Rather than seizing these moments and encouraging students to talk about their own experiences, understandings, and concerns about power – or recalibrating their curricular choices to include written works that touch on similar themes – they turn their attention elsewhere. Early in the semester one of the participants, recommends that a student visit with her after class rather than encouraging others to build on the student's complaint that rules are unevenly distributed in her school (J. Saunders, observation, October 8 and 12, 2006). Asking about their decision to move classroom conversations away from such matters generates vague responses or changes of subject. When asked directly how they perceive multiculturalism as a tool for confronting inequality, the preservice teachers choose instead to extol the importance of teaching in a way that honors multiple intelligences or to contemplate how creating units on stereotyping might combat the problem. In the former, multiple intelligences becomes a panacea for addressing diversity, but lacking a direct connection to race, class, or gender it folds in upon itself. Regarding stereotyping, units examining how we label one another could serve as an effective entry point for students to consider how our behaviors reify and reproduce the status quo. However, if taught in isolation of a piece of literature that speaks to stereotyping either thematically or directly, or not used as a basis for a larger conversation about equity, these units could do little to enlarge students' thinking.

In several instances the preservice teachers move the conversation from multiculturalism to multicultural literature, perhaps as a means of avoidance (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006; S. Martinez, interview, October 27, 2006; J. Morgan, November 2, 2006). Yet in analyzing data, very few historically marginalized writers are introduced or even alluded to in the respective classrooms. Rather, the preservice teachers spend the bulk of the semester examining the work of predominantly White/male authors with their students. With the absence of multiple perspectives drawn from women authors, and writers of color – and a discomfort with confronting inequity directly inside the classroom – the preservice teachers actually perpetuate the status quo, enacting a pedagogy that is antithetical to the very tenets that critical multiculturalism (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995) seeks to embody. Comber (2001) asserts that "critical literacies involve people using language to exercise power, to enhance everyday life in schools and communities, and to question practices of privilege and injustice" (p. 1). That the preservice teachers do not cultivate opportunities for students to consider critically how language represents power or to drink deeply of a whole host of authors is a likely by-product of their own tenuous understandings of multiculturalism. Lacking a firm grasp of these precepts, when questioned, they choose to move the conversation in a completely different direction.

Struggling to Adopt Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

In addition to superficial understandings of multiculturalism and regular deflections of its importance, the participants exhibit a weakness in tying their pedagogical practice to their students' unique cultures. Lacking explicit links, the preservice teachers are additionally reinforcing a hegemonic stance that is counterintuitive to creating the conditions that they purport as educators – particularly their goal of helping students connect literature and learning with their lives (S. Martinez,

personal communication, April 6, 2006; M. Andrews, reflection, March 21, 2006). This is most noticeable in the early part of their apprentice teaching semester. Positioned as novices the preservice teachers initially mimic the teaching styles of their cooperating teachers; like their mentors, the participants steer clear of controversy and limit discussions that begin to deviate beyond the parameters of the planned lesson. Thus, connecting literature to students' lived experiences and cultural knowledge is minimal.

As such, the preservice teachers rely on their cooperating teachers to help them negotiate the rules of the school, and their space within this figured world. The intersection of their own experiences (and figured worlds) and those of their students and cooperating teachers seems to limit their pedagogical practice and willingness to take risks; indeed the preservice teachers' initial lessons reflect a desire to please their cooperating teachers rather than a means of effecting an appropriate pedagogical approach. This is noticeably evident in one of the participants; feeling restricted in terms of time, the curricular content, and the ethos of the class, Matilda falls back on a banking model (Freire, 2005) to guide her pedagogical practice. What is interesting about this reliance is that it develops after Matilda attempts to get students to draw on their peers as a knowledge source and they resist. After modeling how to use a graphic organizer during a vocabulary activity and then requesting that students work with a partner to complete their work, Matilda folds under pressure from students to stay up front and "go word by word" in a transactional manner. This acquiescence seems shaped both by Matilda's experiences as a student and her desire not to rock the boat in Mrs. Holland's classroom. With that said, by reinforcing the notion that Matilda is the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1986), she in many ways promotes an encouraged dependence among her students.

Culturally responsive pedagogy does not imply that working with others is a necessary component for effective teaching and learning. But in order for teaching to be both culturally validating and affirming, it should rely on "the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2000, p. 29). By limiting their pedagogical practice to that of their cooperating teachers, which often utilizes a teacher-centered approach with controlled classroom conversations (J. Saunders, observation, September 26, 2006, October 4, 2006), the participants narrow their students' capacity – or certainly, interest – in connecting their lives with their work in the classroom.

Given full rein of the planning and teaching – which occurs about mid-way through the semester – the preservice teachers begin to alter their approaches, employing popular culture as a resource for drawing out prior knowledge to engender relevance in their lessons. By using film, music, and media as reference points in their classroom practice, the preservice teachers help students better connect to overarching ideas and concepts existing in the literature they are studying (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005). Observation data documents more active engagement and participation in classes; students coming into class make references to a film they have seen that reminds them of an earlier class discussion (J. Saunders, observation, November 5, 2006). Matilda and Sandra – both of whom express a desire to be taken seriously as teachers (M. Andrews, personal communication, October 20, 2006; S. Martinez, interview, October 26, 2006) begin to lighten up and joke around with their students. By using pop culture and the media as common ground, the participants are able to gain entry into their students' lives, at least partially. Making use of this information in a pedagogical sense is a bit more

challenging, particularly as the preservice teachers fall back on the models offered by their cooperating teachers.

5.2 COMPLICATIONS IN MAKING MEANING WITHIN THE FIGURED WORLD OF SCHOOLS

As is acknowledged in the research on figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998), the participants are working within recognizable fields of activity – the classroom – and within larger figured worlds. In this case, the world of policy, and the district and state mandates that exist as artifacts of additional figured worlds serve to complicate the preservice teachers' experiences in schools. As novices, the participants have little experience in negotiating these intersecting realities and are still evolving in their development of unique teacher personae. While attempting to adopt the role of practitioner, the participants grapple with their own identities, which are "produced socially and culturally from the generic personae and scenery of … figured worlds as they are positioned in the hierarchies of power and privilege that relate fields of activity" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 192). Thus, as the preservice teachers are honing their practice, they are simultaneously attempting to make sense of the experience within a larger context; this meaning-making exercise is where novices learn to "author their world" (p. 170), but it is rife with competing voices and systems of power.

The themes developed in this study suggest that the participants are in many ways limited in terms of power, both by their role as practicing teachers in the classroom *and* by dynamics that exist outside this realm, in the larger figured worlds of the school and district. Factors that hinder the preservice teachers' work are to some degree equally present for their cooperating teachers. As a result, both practicing and experienced teachers have few avenues for combating institutional practices that favor some students while marginalizing others, offering stridently different learning opportunities for those

relegated to grade level courses. This powerlessness manifests in various ways in the participants' classrooms, and may offer clues as to why there are limited examples of culturally responsive practice existing in the data.

Reproducing of the Status Quo

What this research seems to indicate is that, like an earlier study from Smagorinsky, Lakly, and Johnson (2002), students at the preservice teachers' schools are tracked less by ability and more by a "willingness to play the school game," (p. 195). The school game – and its representative rules – extends to the educators at work within the building. As is evident in Jenny's situation, the teachers who exhibit more noticeable compliance at West High School are rewarded with honors-track students and with a placement in departmental wings. Jenny's cooperating teacher Ms. Bacon, who is outspoken about her aversion to the testing mandates and the requisite narrowing of the curriculum is relegated to an isolated third floor classroom, apart from her language arts peers. Students are similarly distributed; many of those who are unable or unwilling to function inside the more privileged teachers' classes are moved to Ms. Bacon's room, under the auspices of a more caring or flexible environment. Jenny's perception of her students is that they have internalized the label of "regular" student; thus, even as she attempts to enact challenging and culturally appropriate practice, she is greeted with concern by her students, who worry over their capacity to meet her expectations.

Like their students, the preservice teachers are learning "the rules" but their struggle to resist the status quo is exacerbated on two fronts: one, as is discussed in an earlier finding, they are still contemplating what it means to enact the principles of multiculturalism; two, they exhibit concern for deviating too far from their cooperating teachers' practice, which could put them in a precarious position in terms of written evaluations of their performance. This latter concern is more noticeable in the case of

Matilda and Sandra, who offer examples of their lesson planning from classes that deviate greatly from lessons developed during their apprentice teaching semester. In discussions about this disparity, each describe an unwillingness to diverge from her cooperating teacher's practice in order to get through the practicum experience without conflict. In this sense, all three participants reinforce the culture and "rules" of their classrooms and schools; given greater flexibility in terms of planning and implementation, Jenny strives to push back against the status quo more noticeably. Matilda and Sandra – although they speak of inequity and their concerns about the role schools play in sorting students and creating conditions that will later produce success or failure – seem to reproduce their cooperating teachers' compliance within the figured worlds of Twain Middle and Smith High School.

Contending with a Restrictive Curriculum

As is discussed earlier in this study, the preservice teachers are in agreement that teaching in a culturally responsive manner includes the use of literature by and about authors of color, women, and other marginalized groups. However, within the figured world of their schools, the participants feel hampered to the degree to which they can select literature that might be engaging and relevant to their students. Matilda's sentiment that "we need to tailor what we're teaching and what we're reading [to] the demographics of our school… and choose a diverse curriculum instead of the old dead white guys" (M. Andrews, interview, November 6, 2006) is unrealized because of two mitigating factors.

First, the selections included in the curricular guides – created with practicing teachers and curriculum specialists at the district level and used by each of the participating schools – reflect a largely canonical body of writers for Matilda's pre-AP sophomore (world literature) course, drawing from classical works like *Antigone*, *The*

Inferno, and *Julius Caesar*. This largely White/male canon is noticeable throughout the district curriculum, despite state standards that require that the student "reads widely to increase knowledge of his/her own culture, the culture of others, and the common elements across cultures" to "(A) recognize distinctive and shared characteristics of cultures through reading; and (B) compare text events with his/her own and other readers' experiences" (TEA, 2006). Although this standard does not explicitly connote women writers or writers of color, one might conclude that those voices are a vital portion of "the culture of others." However, given Matilda's concern that she not deviate too far her cooperating teacher's plans or get students off track in terms of their advanced placement curriculum, she backtracks on her earlier thought that demographics should guide a teacher's literary choices.

Second, despite the preservice teachers' stated inclination toward writers of color as a means of engaging in multicultural practice and their stated goal of generating student interest by drawing on a wide swath of authors, they express a lack of sophistication in synthesizing marginalized writers with those already represented in the district curriculum. Additionally, they seem ill-equipped to include even short pieces – essays, poems, or short stories – by authors of color who allude to the great works, or in selecting literary pieces that share similar universal themes or compliment a unit of study. The absence of such work further reproduces the status quo, both in terms of what students are exposed to in the classroom and in enlarging the participants' teaching repertoire.

This phenomenon is well documented in the research (Carnoy, Elmore, & Siskin, 2003; McNeil, 2000), and although the participants do not suffer under a curriculum that requires that "all teachers in all schools read the same literature on approximately the same day, ask the same questions, [and] use the same assessments" (Smagorinsky et al.,

2002) they still exhibit a conflicted stance. The data show that in the end, the preservice teachers tend to go along with their cooperating teachers' (and school English departments) preferences. This acquiescence is apparent across three schools; excepting a few instances where students are asked to extend what they are learning in class by self-selecting poetry or novels, the curriculum is largely static.

In fairness, the preservice teachers in this study were each paired with experienced – and largely, flexible – cooperating teachers and could likely have incorporated more culturally diverse authors within the classroom context. However, the perception that they are positioned as visitors in another teacher's space and rely on that teacher's approval to complete the requirements for certification likely figures into their choice to adhere to the literature specified in the curriculum guides. In such a manner, the participants are confronted with the status quo, reproduced at the classroom level; absent any sense of power to overtly rebel, they instead choose to go along.

5.3 SOCIAL EXPERIMENTATION

Despite a perceived pressure to conform to the culture of their assigned schools and classrooms, one of the more promising findings evolving from this case study is the increasing experimentation occurring in the classrooms as preservice teachers conclude their apprentice teaching. Although there is a continuum of efficacy among the participants regarding this movement toward more culturally responsive practice, each dabbles in reconsidering – and, at times, reconceptualizing – her practice. As is detailed in the research on figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998), although "an overemphasis on social constraints leaves little room for human agency," (p. 278) a person can still "significantly reorient one's own behavior, and can even participate in the creation of new figured worlds and their possibilities for new selves" (p. 282). In the process of authoring their identities as teachers, the participants too make some gains in

empowering their students to take charge over their own learning. Recognizing that their grade level students are positioned – in a sense – beneath their advanced placement peers within the larger school world, the preservice teachers seek methods to enliven the learning environment by offering students the opportunity to position themselves as the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978) within the classroom space.

Because of a whole host of interruptions (testing, assemblies, etc.) during her teaching of *The Crucible*, Jenny and her cooperating teacher decide to extend their unit plan well beyond what was suggested in the district curricular guides. And, even though they must make do with a limited number of books, they are able to conclude this study with a comprehensive, culminating project where students can connect the play's larger themes to those present in media, music, and poetry. By promoting cross-genre connections, Jenny is privy to the figured worlds of her students, and as a result their interests, ideas, and cultures. Fighting for opportunities for students to deeply contemplate a unit of study or piece of literature is challenging inside a figured world that disempowers teachers' work by codifying the curriculum and/or teachers' pedagogical practice. Expressing many of the same sentiments that occur in earlier research on accommodation and resistance (Smagorinsky et al., 2002) this case study's participants hope to

> come back to fighting for room for the student in the classroom, student voice and choice and direction of their education, as well as just keeping them interested instead of subjecting them to their own education (p. 207).

This willingness to reconceptualize instruction, adopting the notion that "success as a teacher [is] defined, in large part, by the degree of academic and personal growth experienced by students" (Gillette, 1996) suggests the preservice teachers are moving toward agency, and away from the static reproduction plaguing our schools.

Cultivating Reciprocity Within the Classroom Space

As is detailed earlier, the case study informants make noticeable gains in drawing on students' prior learning during their apprentice teaching semester. Attempts to employ "the critical use of popular culture" (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005) to extend students' literacy practices increases as the semester progresses. By offering students opportunities to connect literature to their lived experiences and to the larger culture, and to take ownership over their own learning, the participants offer students the chance to "hold these worlds still so that texts could be jointly reconsidered, reimagined" (Dyson, 2000, p. 143). These reimaginings in some regard reorder who is positioned as the more knowledgeable peer within the classroom space.

This movement inside the zone of proximal development is not easily negotiated by all of the participants. In fact, despite some evidence that reciprocity is realized – where students are able to blend artifacts from their own worlds (like music, art, poetry, and meaning) with those regularly occurring in the figured world of the classroom (like literary analysis, symbolism and theme) – data suggests that shedding the mantle of "knowledge giver" does not occur without strife. The "banking model" that Freire (2005) describes is evident at different points in each of the participants' classrooms. Likewise, the preservice teachers' students exhibit a reticence to adopt the role of more knowledgeable peer. Uncertain in this new role, they occcasionally hesitate in their "performances," seeking their preservice (and cooperating) teacher's approval.

It is possible that these tentative movements are a reflection of the figured world of the classroom – where students are oriented toward a dependence on others for meaning-making. It is additionally possible that the classroom culture at times is reflective less of reciprocity and more of "reciprocal distancing," whereby there is a "devaluing of students' linguistic and sociocultural knowledge and resources" and where

"teachers and students struggle over whose cultural practices would serve as resources in the classroom" (Larson, 2004). Given the burgeoning nature of young teachers' pedagogical practice, it might be that the participants and their students encounter disequilibrium when attempting to switch roles. Regardless of the success of these attempts, they do open up a space for reciprocity to exist, allowing the preservice teachers the chance to author a different approach to their pedagogical practice with culturally diverse students.

Growing in Agency

The benefit of preservice teachers growing in their capacity to "author their experiences" (Holland et al., 1998) is that this self-authoring increases their capacity for agency within figured worlds. That this work occurs within – and potentially, against – a "set of constraints that are also a set of possibilities" (p. 171) is apparent. The participants are expected to conform to some degree to the rules of the figured worlds in which they work; into these worlds they bring with them a collection of tools and artifacts from prior experiences. It is their ability to appropriately blend the experiences from these intersecting figured worlds – those of learner, practicing teacher, and capable practitioner – that speaks to agency and offers hope for educators who labor in culturally diverse environments. Learning to teach in urban contexts is particularly complex for preservice teachers – like those in this study – who have no direct experience with similar schools. Attempts to tease out this disconnect surfaces concern with the participants.

Due to her private school experiences, Sandra has difficulty grasping how public education serves to reinforce hegemonic norms. Her frustration with the absence of students of color in advanced placement (honors) classes is likely rooted in her experiences in a largely successful, predominantly Latino Catholic school. Having experienced first-hand intellectually engaged and successful Latino peers (including

herself) Sandra seeks ways in which to assume the mantle of role model for her students. By encouraging students to engage with larger social issues – like inequity within the school, which is to some degree addressed through writing assignments – she fosters trust among her students. The cultivation of an open dialogue inside the classroom space accordingly expands Sandra's confidence, and as a result, her willingness to take additional pedagogical risks.

For the preservice teachers, the increased confidence – and agency – seems to coincide with their capacity to see themselves as change agents, and advocates for their students. Garnering a greater understanding of the figured world of schools necessitates this new role. Interestingly enough, this does not appear as a social justice stance but rather as an act of advocacy for individual students, as is the case when one of the participants seeks to make a personal connection with a student who is suspended from school. This study offers some evidence that advocacy, like efficacy in teaching, grows over time and through circumstance. After moving into a new figured world (that of her first teaching appointment) and discovering that one of her Latino students is sleeping in his car, one of the participants "roared into the English office to find a fellow 'outcast,' and begged of him, 'Where are all the homeless shelters in this town?! I have a student sleeping in his car in the Kroger parking lot!!!'" The teacher replied, "Don't you know, Newbie? We don't need shelters or social services in Springtown (a pseudonym) because we don't have problems here!" (J. Morgan, personal communication, June 26, 2007).

While this example does not correlate with classroom practice, it does suggest that the apprentice teaching semester is still capable of sowing the seeds for future advocacy and budding agency. As preservice teachers navigate and gain confidence in their roles within the figured world of schools, it is possible they may indeed become change agents within these realms.

Kugelmass (2000) writes that in order to prepare teachers to meet the challenges of diverse and often institutionalized settings, they must equip themselves with more than pedagogical knowledge, an understanding of social-political culture, and a commitment to educational equity. In addition to this commitment, if young teachers are unable to cultivate an "internalized sense of agency" (p. 179) they may falter as they negotiate the complexities of work in the classroom. Without agency themselves, how might they foster just such an ideal and cultivate transformative classroom practices for their students? The participants included in this study exhibit differing strengths during their apprentice teaching semester, but there is evidence that as they learn the rules and adopt the appropriate roles afforded to them inside figured worlds they have yet to encounter, they will continue to grow as advocates for their students – and hopefully, strive for equity in the process.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The implications of this study involving preservice teachers' understandings of multicultural education and the use of culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogies as a part of their classroom practice fall into the realm of teacher education, programmatically speaking. As developed in the themes and findings elaborated in Chapter Four and earlier in Chapter Five, the implications include first the notion that preservice teachers should have greater opportunities to consider figured world theory early in their fieldwork experiences so that they might better contextualize their time in schools and develop a mindset for actively deflects deficit thinking. By recognizing the role that schools play in positioning both teachers and students, preservice teachers might better grasp the necessity of employing tools like culturally responsive practice to push back against hegemonic forces that limit the opportunities for some of their students. The second implication directly impacts teacher educators, calling on those who work

with preservice teachers to make explicit ways to resist the reproduction of the status quo in public schools. Exposure to a variety of strategies and pedagogical tools to enhance their teaching is not enough to ensure preservice teachers' success upon completion of their preparation program. They must also grow in understanding about how to employ these tools appropriately within the context of the classroom, and do so in a way that honors the diversity present there. The final implication calls for teacher preparation programs to address social justice directly, so that young teachers will move into public schools with an equity mindset that is fully developed. By modeling lesson design and classroom interactions that build upon the notion of social justice – despite the occasional discomfort that accompanies such practices – teacher educators can create the conditions for young teachers to successfully enact change in diverse, urban school systems.

Recognizing Intersecting Realities

Given the persistent reality that public school teachers are drawn in large part from a pool of middle class, White university women while public school populations continue to grow in terms of cultural and economic diversity, it is imperative that teacher educators assist preservice teachers in managing what are quite often disparate perspectives and understandings in their fieldwork sites. Data from this study suggests that knowing and connecting with students is a necessary component for culturally responsive practice in the English/language arts classroom. However, this knowledge must also include a layer of understanding about how the figured world of schools serves to position some students beneath others, and a willingness to host frank conversations about how to rectify such subordination. By engaging in such discussions in the university classroom, preservice teachers might better cultivate them during fieldwork experiences, and do so explicitly. Examples documented through the analysis and themes chapter indicate that many of the more meaningful classroom interactions occurring in

this study came about through happenstance, rather than a conscious effort to draw on students' prior knowledge and experiences to lay the foundations for meaning-making.

In a discussion of his work with educators, Howard (2006) acknowledges an "achievement triangle" that represents three dimensions of knowing "that are necessary for us to be effective in our work for educational equity." These are defined as: "knowing myself, knowing students, and knowing my practice" (p. 126). This research is in many ways suggestive of figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) insomuch as it recognizes the myriad perspectives and kinds of knowledge that are intersecting within the classroom space. By asking preservice teachers to investigate these intersections – and the requisite positioning implied within these worlds – we help them construct a foundation of tolerance and support of difference. Likewise, among her recommendations for transforming teacher education, Nieto (2000) includes giving educators opportunities to "face and accept their own identities" and to "become learners of their students' realities" (p. 184). By researching their students, teachers are better prepared to address their content area in a culturally appropriate and authentic manner.

Programmatically, if teacher educators – in the concern over time – seek ways for preservice teachers to better understand local communities in a more manageable manner, there are other means of discovering this information. The cultural immersion experiences described by Buck and Sylvester (2005) and inspired by Moll and his colleagues (1992) offer one way for preservice teachers to gain access to community resources. However, it is necessary to couch these experiences appropriately so that preservice teachers do not in effect make exotic what is simply different from their own lived experiences. Cochran-Smith (2003) notes there is evidence that suggests immersion experiences "can have an impact on the complexity of students' views of culture, their cultural understandings, their appreciation of family resources, and their ability to

contextualize the concepts they are learning." Success in this endeavor, though, is reliant on "the quality and extent of reflection and reading that are connected to the community experience… and the facilitation and support prospective teachers receive as they make sense of the experiences" (p. 8-9).

This implication suggests that although preservice teachers in this study are required to complete fieldwork throughout their preparation program – with persistent opportunities to work directly with students – they are seldom required to grapple with the role that race, class, gender, and power play in positioning students (and themselves) within the figured worlds of schools. By asking students to engage in some type of cultural immersion, we are additionally asking them to consider the socio-cultural interactions that occur inside that space. Bringing these experiences back into the university classroom – either through written expression or discussion - affords the class as a whole to attend to the diversity that exists within their local community, and to unearth the assumptions they may or may not have about a particular segment of that society. Perhaps more importantly, this might open up a dialogue about why culturally responsive practice is necessary, as stated by the demographic imperative.

Making Explicit the Theoretically Abstract

Beyond more opportunities to garner meaningful information about their students to build on within the classroom space, a second implication is that of helping preservice teachers make concrete the theoretically abstract so that they may better resist the status quo in public schools. During the course of data analysis, it becomes clear that the preservice teachers lack a sophisticated understanding of how theory (and concepts) informs practice. This might be due in part to the "grab-bag of ideas and tricks" (as Jenny acknowledges) to which they are exposed in their teacher preparation courses. Indeed, there seems to have been more emphasis placed on survival strategies and

interesting classroom activities without a firm foundational rationale for those practices. There was also a lack of prolonged engagement with theories that could enhance their pedagogical practice. The results of this study suggest that the participants consistently fall back on the Gardner's (1993) multiple intelligences theory as a means for addressing cultural diversity, even though there is a wealth of more appropriate (and accessible) research on how to approach diversity in the classroom context. And, while evidence exists that the participants have had some exposure to other theorists, their coursework requirements do not push preservice teachers to examine these notions in the context of fieldwork – thus, widening the gap between theory and practice. Coupled with the absence of modeling by their professors for how to place social justice front and center, the participants avoid and deflect similar opportunities with their own students during their practicum experience.

Lacking contextualized meanings, the participants have no substantive theoretical base to undergird the decisions they make in the classroom; rather, they tend to enact a hodgepodge of strategies and activities they have experienced or read about in teacher preparation courses without considering or questioning the efficacy of these choices. Based on conversations with and observations of the preservice teachers, it seems that a large part of their preparation focuses on cursory understandings of issues of diversity, including the creation of cultural autobiographies or unit plans that include writers of color. Like the preservice teachers Paccione (2000) describes, this study's participants are left in large part "proselytized, but not [completely] converted" (p. 999-1000). Paccione's work indicates that becoming a multicultural educator occurs in stages and includes a host of developmental experiences, among them: having parents with "a moral disposition toward inclusiveness;" interacting with others different from oneself; or taking courses that might inspire a "transformational understanding" of issues of diversity

(p. 999). Primed with tentative understandings of inequity but limited exposure to the salient research for how to address this reality, the participants struggle to flourish within the figured world of schools.

Leland and Harste (2005) acknowledge, "Teachers… need more than a good grasp of content knowledge about the different subject areas they will be teaching. Perhaps more important for them is the ability to see themselves as agents of change – people who can make a difference in the lives of children" (p. 75-76). Data analysis suggests that the preservice teachers from this study are well versed in their content areas, and have a wide array of instructional strategies at their fingertips. What is missing, however, is how to blend these in a manner that turns their pedagogical practice into art – to "develop a community of learners" who "view knowledge as not static" but rather "shared, recycled, and constructed" Ladson-Billings (1995b, p. 471-481). Had the preservice teachers embarked on close readings of culturally relevant (and culturally responsive) practice, perhaps they might have used such models to refine their own practice and develop "new pedagogical values" (Allen & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2004, p. 223) to better address the instructional needs of their students.

Addressing Social Justice Directly

The final implication derived from the themes and analysis detailed in earlier chapters indicates an absence of practice in discourse around inequality, the status quo, and institutional practices that privilege one group (predominantly White, middle class) of students over others within the figured world of schools. This is evident in the preservice teachers' deflection of discussions tied to matters of race, class, or gender occurring in the apprentice teaching classroom. What is concerning about this tendency toward avoidance is that in an English/language arts classroom, it is difficult to avoid controversy altogether, particularly when conducting a critical reading of literature.

Teacher education programs must create and sustain a safe environment in which to explore contentious subjects and assist fledgling teachers in the development of pedagogical tools necessary to enhance student learning.

In her discussion of the Teaching for Diversity program, Ladson-Billings (2001) asserts "an important component of preparing to be a teacher is interrogating the way status characteristics like race, class, and gender configure every aspect of our lives" (p. 5). While there is evidence to suggest that this study's participants produced occasional reflective essays for classes describing their personal histories and additionally, what they were experiencing in schools, the preservice teachers did little to complicate these understandings in light of their students' far different cultural understandings. Gay (2002) asserts that "the knowledge that teachers need to have about cultural diversity goes beyond mere awareness of, respect for, and general recognition of the fact that ethnic groups have different values or express similar values in various ways" (p. 107). These class reflections tended to adopt a politically correct glossiness, which in my estimation is suggestive more of the preservice teachers' lack of practice in having public conversations about difference than as a means to cover deeply entrenched dispositions toward prejudice. What this implication reinforces then is a need for a space to engage in discourse about race, class, and gender so that such conversations become a natural practice for preservice teachers.

One of the final considerations of this implication lies in the preservice teachers' naïveté regarding how culture shapes students and themselves, and how these differences manifest within the classroom context. While each of the participants is forthright in detailing her own personal history and the figured worlds from which she has sprung, they appear less capable of examining how these experiences might differ from their students – or even, interfere with their capacity to teach well in culturally diverse, urban

schools. Gay with Kirkland (2003) argue that to ameliorate this reality, teacher preparation programs should cultivate "learning climates and expectations where self-reflections and cultural critical consciousness are part of the routine, normative demands of students" (p. 184). By making such notions ubiquitous throughout the teacher preparation process and modeling how to engage in conversations about difference, equity, and social justice, preservice teachers can move into their career with the capacity to enact change within the larger system.

Conclusion

Leland and Harste (2005) remind us that attitudes and predispositions toward social justice "are not developed overnight or in the safety of a college classroom. [They are] the product of inner struggle, self-interrogation, and the realization that anyone can grow into a new kind of person" (p. 76). The implications of this dissertation are not that dissimilar from those detailed in other studies that attend to preservice teachers and their work in culturally diverse contexts. What I hope to extend is the notion that cursory understandings of the multicultural education knowledge base do little to confront and alter the inequity existing in schools. Absent the appropriate modeling of pedagogical tools and discourse patterns to engage with students in urban schools, preservice teachers will likely experience a difficult transition into the profession and do little to increase their students' educational attainment. By structuring teacher preparation programs in a manner that appropriately blends the educational research with the practical considerations necessary to thrive in schools, we are creating the conditions for thoughtful and engaging pedagogical practice. Figured worlds are central to this study in part because they resonate well with the larger metaphor used within these pages, that of the Hero's Journey. Perhaps more importantly, by framing this work through a figured worlds lens, I hope to make evident that preservice teachers – and their wielding of the

tools and artifacts that reside amid the world of teaching – have some power to change in their thinking, their practices, and their positions in the process of learning to teach. Given the complex world they are entering as young educators, this may not be much recompense. In terms of possibly effecting change in the lives and prospects of their present and future students, this is a powerful tool to wield.

Appendix

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interview Protocol for Preservice Teachers

Multicultural Education Theories

1. How do you define multicultural education? How have discussions about multicultural education occurred in your university courses?
2. Why do you think the university includes multicultural education as a part of the curriculum? How have you found this (or not found this) to be useful when working with students?
3. In what ways have you attempted to enact the principles of multicultural education in your fieldwork experiences?
4. Do you find that multicultural education has more to do with what pieces of literature you teach or with how you plan for and present lessons for your particular students?

Culturally Relevant/Responsive Pedagogy

1. In what ways do you strive to make learning relevant for the students with whom you work?
2. What role do your expectations about students' abilities to perform play in how you plan and execute a lesson?
3. How do you define critical consciousness? Does the development of a critical consciousness (for yourself and/or your students) appear overtly in class assignments or discussions?

Funds of Knowledge

1. How much do you know about your students' home lives? Are the students that you teach similar to or different from yourself and the students with whom you went to school? How are they similar and/or different?
2. What types of assignments have you constructed to better learn about your students' interests, lives, and worldview?
3. In what ways have you attempted to connect to the community from which your students have come?
4. What are some existing community assets that you could foresee using in the classroom? How might you employ these assets to make learning relevant and engaging for students?

Interview Protocol for Participating College of Education/Liberal Arts Professors

Multicultural Education Theories

1. How do you approach the teaching of diverse students with your preservice teachers?
2. Do you find multicultural education to be better presented as a part of your everyday conversation with preservice teachers or as a separate course?
3. How often do conversations about diversity occur in your courses? Are there some courses that lend themselves to conversations about diversity more than others?

Culturally Relevant/Responsive Pedagogy

1. In what ways do encourage preservice teachers to make learning relevant for their students during fieldwork experiences?
2. What types of assignments (if any) do you give preservice teachers that support notions of culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy?

Funds of Knowledge

1. Do you ask preservice teachers to explore the communities near their fieldwork placements as a part of any course assignments?
2. What kinds of conversations do you have with preservice teachers about connecting with local communities to enhance teaching and learning?

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